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Celebrate National Drama Week, February 9 through 15

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# D R A M A T I C S

The Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts

Vol. XVIII, No. 3

DECEMBER, 1946

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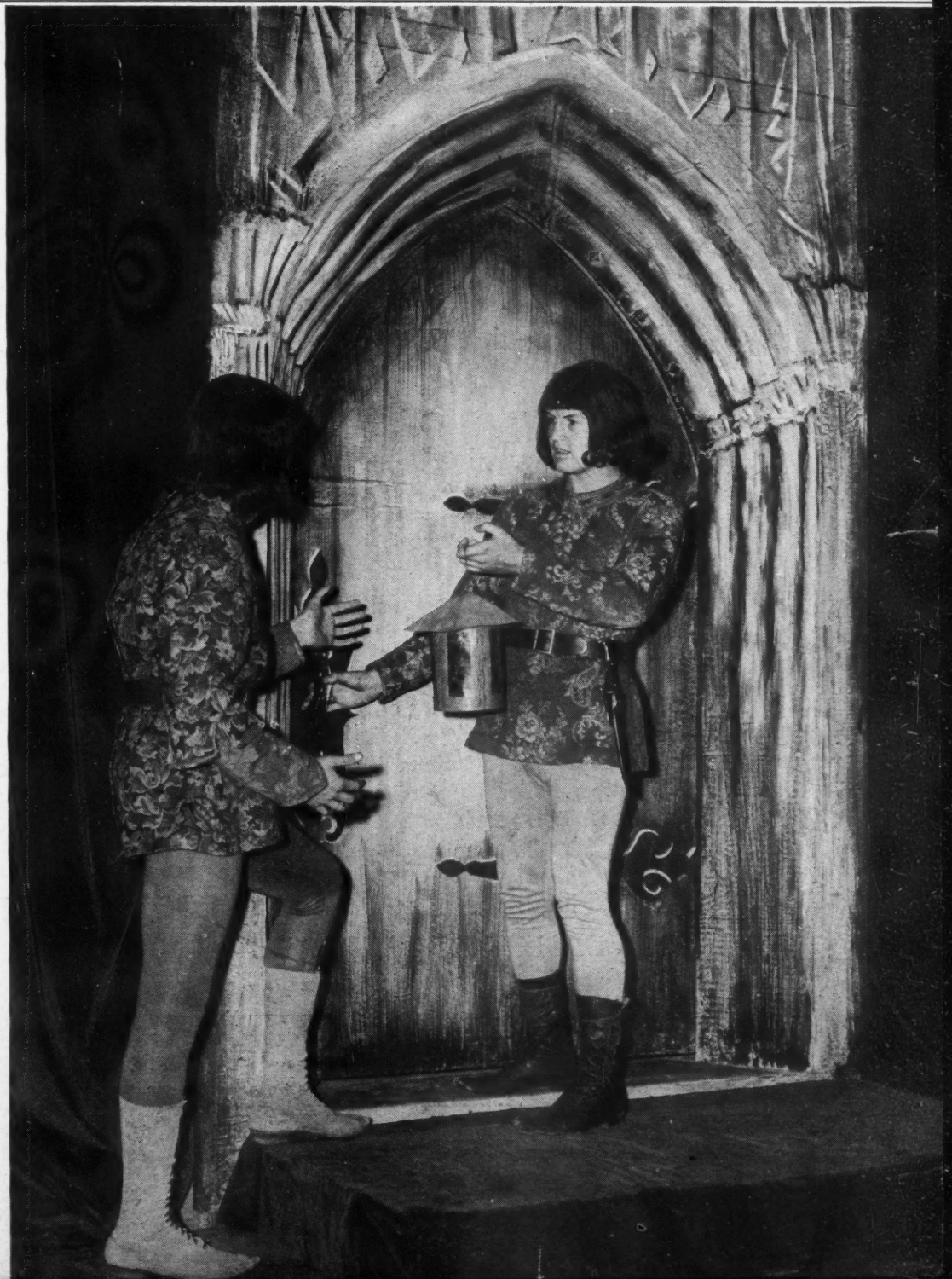
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Scene from A. A. Milne's *The Ivory Door*, produced by the San Diego, Calif., High School (Thespian Troupe 551) under the direction of Lois Perkins. James Chilton as Brand and Leon Burton as King Perivale.



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## NOTES AND FOOTNOTES

by the  
EDITOR

**A**MONG the proposals which were under consideration lately by the United States Preparatory Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, was the establishment of an International Theatre Institute and the promotion of art festivals among the nations affiliated with UNESCO. We earnestly hope that these proposals will receive further consideration at the UNESCO meeting now being held in Paris. The exchange of dramatic productions among nations is rich in opportunities for better understanding among peoples. The language of the theatre is understood everywhere; it speaks of tolerance, good will, sympathy, and brotherhood.

On an international broadcast we heard recently, two of England's drama critics stressed the need for a National Theatre in that country to set standards in speech, play selection, and dramatic production. When we recall that theatre standards in England are considerably above our own, the need for a National Theatre in this country seems urgent indeed.

"Brotherhood-Pattern for Peace" is the theme for the fourteenth annual observance of National Brotherhood Week. February 16-23. Program aids for use in schools and colleges may be secured by writing to the National Conference of Christians and Jews, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, New York.

The presentation of a play or pageant in observance of the Christmas Season is a tradition with many schools. The drama club has, in the performance of such a play or pageant, a unique opportunity to bring joy and good will to young and old alike. For many school children, the Christmas play or program is the highlight of the Season. No effort should be spared, therefore, to make the performance impressive in the fullest sense.

National Drama Week will be observed February 9 through 15. For a number of years we have urged educational drama groups everywhere to plan appropriate activities for this occasion each season. National Drama Week provides the opportunity to focus attention upon the contributions which the drama makes to our national life. It is also the occasion to let the school and community know more about the activities of the dramatics club or department. A list of suggestions for the observance of National Drama Week may be secured from The National Thespian Society, College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, Ohio. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Readers of this magazine are urged to attend the conventions of the Speech Association of America and the American Educational Theatre Association at the Hotel Sherman, Chicago, on December 30, 31, and January 1. Further particulars appear on page 3.

Does your play production program for the year call for the presentation of a children's play? Does it call for the production of a play chosen primarily for its literary value to students? We have long maintained that a well-rounded program for school or college theatre cannot be achieved without productions of this nature. The notion that the school theatre, in particular, should limit itself to the presentation of light, popular plays is educationally short-sighted.

Several directors have written us that dramatics is practically non-existent in their schools this season due to the over-emphasis placed by school officials on athletics. Maybe so, but in the instances we investigated the real situation pointed not to over-emphasis on athletics, but to lack of genuine interest and aggressiveness on the part of the dramatics director. No one, particularly school officials, can be expected to manifest respect for half-hearted effort.

Looking through copies of the new publication, *Theatre Newsletter*, published in London, we note the following news items regarding theatre developments in England: The Old Vic announces the formation of a Theatre Centre on the site of a bomb-damaged theatre to house a school, children's theatre and experimental theatre. The Young Vic or Children's Theatre will spend the greater part of its time on tour throughout the British Isles. . . . The final report of the Reith Committee on New Towns recommends that each town of 40,000 to 60,000 inhabitants have a theatre seating 1,000 to 1,500 for regular performances by a local professional repertory company or touring companies, and a smaller theatre seating from 400 to 600 for amateur performances. . . . The Highbury Little Theatre, which seats only 108, has a membership of 3,500 and a waiting list running into the hundreds. . . . Theatre activity is very much in evidence in England.

Reports from several of the one day drama clinics being sponsored this season by The National Thespian Society with the co-operation of colleges and universities show attendance considerably higher than originally expected. Plans are already being made for a second series of drama clinics for secondary schools during the 1947-48 season. Full particulars will be announced by The National Thespian Society next spring.

The next few years will see the construction of many new high school and college auditoriums and theatres. If practices of the past are to be taken as a criterion, many of these buildings will be designed by architects and builders who possess no specialized knowledge of educational theatre requirements. The only way to help correct this situation is for the dramatics director to bring her influence to bear upon those in authority to see that the new school auditorium or theatre is designed to serve adequately the needs of a well-rounded dramatic arts program, even though such a program may not exist in the school or college at present. A timely and authoritative publication the director will find extremely helpful is Professor A. S. Gillette's *PLANNING AND EQUIPPING THE EDUCATIONAL THEATRE*, published by The National Thespian Society. The price is 60 cents.

### January Issue

**I**T HAS been our practice in recent years to devote the January issue of this magazine to the publication of pictures of high school productions and other dramatic activities, contributed by schools affiliated with The National Thespian Society. Our next issue will, therefore, be devoted entirely to pictures of dramatic projects sponsored by Thespian schools during the past year. The publication of articles and departments will be resumed with our February number.—Editor.

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DRAMATICS MAGAZINE



# National Speech and Drama Conventions

Hotel Sherman, Chicago

December 30, 31 and January 1

## Speech Association of America

By MAGDALENE KRAMER

Teachers College, Columbia University,  
New York City

A program of general sessions and sectional meetings dealing with various aspects of Speech on all levels of education has been planned for the thirty-first annual convention of the Speech Association of America (formerly the National Association of Teachers of Speech) which will be held at the Hotel Sherman, Chicago, Illinois, December 30, 31, 1946, and January 1, 1947.

The opening session will be held on Monday, December 30, at nine a. m. Professor W. Norwood Brigrance, President of the Speech Association of America, will preside, and address the assembly on the topic: "1946—Year of Decision." Clarence Simon, President of the American Speech Correction Association, and Valentine Windt, President of the American Educational Theatre Association, will also speak.

In the afternoon of December 30 there will be sectional meetings on Radio, Rhetoric, Speech in the Elementary School, Integration of Theatre Education, History of Speech Education, Discussion, Speech in Teachers Colleges, Study of National Resources for Service to the Handicapped, and High School Forensics. There will also be a Reading Hour at four o'clock that afternoon. In the evening there will be a general session concerned with debate on the proposition: "Resolved: That the Federal Government Should Provide a System of Complete Medical Care Available to All Citizens at Public Expense."

Tuesday morning, December 31, the program will open with sectional meetings on American Public Address, Discussion, Phonetics, Speech in Junior Colleges, Oral Interpretation, and the High School Theatre. A general session will follow. At this time the subject "Atomic Energy and World Government" will be discussed by Professor Harrison Brown of the Institute of Nuclear Studies at the University of Chicago. Following Dr. Brown's speech the topic will be discussed by leading members of the Speech Association.

A joint convention luncheon is scheduled for 12:15 on Tuesday, December 31. A speaker of national renown will address the members of the two participating associations.

Events scheduled for the afternoon of Tuesday include sectional meetings on British Oratory, Speech in Secondary Schools, Stuttering, and a Reading Hour. At four o'clock a general session will be held on "The Contribution of Radio and Film to World Understanding." E. W. Ziebarth, Education Director, Central Division-CBS, will speak and discuss international radio programs, records of which will be played. R. E. Blackwell, Associate Director of International Film Foundation, Inc., will show documentary films of Russia and the United States, and discuss their implications for international understanding.

The New Year's Day program will open with a general session on Basic Communications. The advantages of and the objections to courses in communications will be discussed.

Those planning to attend the Convention are urged to make their room reservations at an early date with the Hotel Sherman.

(Further particulars concerning the Conference may be secured by writing to Dr. Loren D. Reid, Executive Secretary, Speech Association of America, University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo.)

## American Educational Theatre Association

By C. R. KASE

Department of Dramatics, University of Delaware,  
Newark, Del.

OFFICIALS of the American Educational Theatre Association anticipate the largest attendance at any convention in the Association's history when delegates convene for the annual meeting to be held at the Hotel Sherman in Chicago on December 30, 31, and January 31. AETA will meet in conjunction with the Speech Association of America.

Fifty outstanding leaders in the educational, community, and professional theatre have accepted invitations to speak at the fourteen section meetings on subjects covering every phase of the theatre. One session will be devoted to a discussion of the integration of theatre education at the various levels. The object is to consider the problem of the unfortunate overlapping which now exists in theatre education. A major feature of the convention will be the session devoted to the American Theatre scene, a survey of the major developments and future plans for our theatre. Officials of the National Theatre Conference, the American National Theatre and Academy, the American Educational Theatre Association, and, it is hoped, the Canadian Theatre, will outline the objectives of these organizations and the future of the American theatre as they see it. Delegates will also hear a report on theatre education as it was conducted at Shrivensham American University (U. S. Army) and a stimulating report on a project establishing the Community Theatre as a Memorial Recreation Center.

Of special significance this year will be the sessions on the New Play Project, which will just have completed its first twelve months of operation, and on the college curriculum in theatre, which has been under exacting study for the past year.

Not only are all the traditional phases of theatre included in the convention agenda, but also there will be discussions of television, audio-visual aids, theatre architecture, and the Japanese theatre.

The practical side of theatre will be emphasized in the exhibits, and in acting demonstrations staged by the Visitation High School of Chicago and by the Goodman Theatre.

A major feature of the entertainment for the delegates will be a performance of *Twelfth Night* to be given by the DePaul University Theatre under the direction of David Itkin.

An innovation at this convention will be the period assigned for meetings of all the Work-Project Committees. These committees not only carry on many important major projects for the Association during the year, but they also afford an opportunity for all members to become personally identified with the activities of the organization.

Following is a list of the section meetings scheduled for the three-day convention: New Plays, Acting, Integration of Theatre Education, The American Theatre Scene, The High School Theatre, Children's Theatre (two sessions), Theatre Architecture, College Theatre Curriculum, Audio-Visual Aids, Theatre Research, and University Theatre.

(For any special information concerning the Convention, write the Convention Chairman, C. R. Kase, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.)



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# Mme. Alla Nazimova

"Little short of miraculous"

The Third in a Series of Seven Articles on Great Actors and Actresses

By PAUL MYERS

Theatre Collection, Public Library, New York City

THE phrase which I have used as a subtitle for this article (or one very like it), was used time and time again to describe the performances of Mme. Alla Nazimova. By means of her superb artistry, this Russian-born actress brought to life on our stage many unforgettable characters. Her death, in Hollywood, on July 13, 1945, took from the theatre one of its greatest actresses and one who will never be replaced. Her's was an individualized artistry, and not a stereotyped or imitative form of expression. Her's was a technique built up through arduous training and long years of experience.

Alla Nazimova was born in Yalta, in the Crimea, on June 4, 1879. Her parents were rather well-to-do, and were able to send their daughter to school in Switzerland. Alla returned to Odessa while still in her early teens to study the violin at the Philharmonic Music Academy. It is believed that she played in the Academy orchestra under the direction of Tschai-kowsky and Rimsky-Korsakoff. At the age of 17, however, Nazimova renounced music in favor of the stage, and left for Moscow to study under the great Constantin Stanislavsky. All students of the theatre know of the work of this Russian theatrician, whose work led to the establishment of the Moscow Art Theatre. Book after book has described how he brought about the great reforms in the Russian theatre, and formulated codes of artistic standards which have effected the theatre of the entire world. To make an all too terse summary of his work, Stanislavsky evolved a naturalistic mode of acting which would not seem incompatible with the new tendencies which were already noticeable in the drama. Ibsen in Norway, Shaw in England and Chekov in Russia (to name but a few) were hard at work writing a new kind of play. The old school of actors was not in harmony with the new school of dramatists, and Stanislavsky was among the first to realize and do something about the problem.

Nazimova must have been an apt pupil, for it is known that offers were made to her by the Moscow producers upon the completion of her training. Tempting as these bids were, the young actress felt that she needed further training before appearing before the metropolitan audiences and she set out to gain experience in the provinces. In this way, she learned how to play under the most trying circumstances, and before all manner of audiences. It is valuable training, and the type that young actors and actresses today have almost no

opportunity of gaining, since the modern theatre is all but confined to the metropolis. In 1904, however, Nazimova must have felt that she was ready to face a more sophisticated audience for, in that year, she became a member of the Paul Orlenoff Company. This was a group of Russian actors whose tours of the capitals of Europe had spread the fame of the new Russian playwrights. On January 21, 1905, Nazimova made her debut in an English speaking capital, when the Orlenoff Company opened in London. The play was *The Chosen People*, a new title for Eugene Nikolayevitch Chirikov's *The Jews*. Chirikov was one of the pre-revolutionary dramatists whose rather advanced views would have attracted the company to his works. It is more than likely that their productions of this and similar plays had more than a little to do with the company's decision to play outside of its native land.

The Orlenoff Company's next move was to the United States, and on March 23, 1905, Nazimova appeared as Lisa in the Chirikov play at New York's Herald Square Theatre. In September of the same year, the company was acting at the Murray Hill Theatre. This was, at that time, a more reasonably priced theatre which offered stock productions and engagements of plays from the theatres of the more fashionable amusement area. During this engagement, the company presented a dramatization of *The Brothers Karamazov* and Ibsen's *Ghosts*. Nazimova played Regina in the latter play; Orlenoff, himself, played Oswald. Mrs. Alving, which was later to become one of Nazimova's greatest roles, was played by Mme. Kriajeva. The critic of the *New York Globe* wrote on January 7, 1906, "Mme. Nazimova in the slender role of Regina displayed a subtle understanding of the stupidity, the coquettishness, the selfishness and the fickleness necessary to its correct portrayal. Her performance was artistic and correct in every detail.

This nameless reviewer shows a much more progressive attitude toward the new tendencies in drama than Annulet Andrews, writing in the *Atlantic Constitution* only a few weeks later. "I flatter the readers of the *Constitution*," writes Andrews, "with the hope that they are not all Ibsenites. I have reason to believe that mine own people are sane." This was the attitude, one must remember, of more than a few isolated individuals. It will be interesting, a bit later, to compare these notes with the reviews of Nazimova's Ibsen productions in the 1930's.

This attitude might have been the largest contributive force to deter the success of the Orlenoff company in the uptown theatres. Whatever the reason, one notes that very soon after this the company was playing East 3rd Street in a theatre renamed Orlenoff's Lyceum. This section of New York was then, as it still is, largely inhabited by people of Russian birth and/or extraction. Occasional engagements were played uptown at the Criterion; but even with this arrangement the company did not prosper. A group of interested citizens (including Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, Mrs. John Jacob Astor, Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt, Richard Watson Gilder and Edward Wharton) sponsored several of their performances uptown during January, 1906. All of these efforts failed, however, and in the spring, the Orlenoff Company returned to Europe.

BEFORE they returned, fortunately,

Mme. Nazimova had signed a contract with the Shuberts to appear in New York in an English speaking role. All through that summer, she studied the new language. On November 13, 1906, the actress made her debut as an English speaking character in the title role of Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*. At first the play was presented only at special matinees; but very soon *A Doll's House* was added, and the two were put on for a regular run at the Princess Theatre. In the latter play, of course, Nazimova played Nora, the lady whose final departure and slamming of the door of her home signalized the emergence and birth of the new woman. In this case, the drama definitely foreshadowed social progress.

Mme. Nazimova very quickly became one of the town's favorite actresses. On April 12, 1907, she appeared as the Comtesse Nina de Lorenzo in a new trifle, *The Comtesse Coquette*; following this the following September with another Ibsen characterization, Hilda Wangel in *The Master Builder*. She was to do one more new role, Lona, in *The Comet*, before going on a tour of the United States during most of 1908. This tour must have been tremendously successful, both artistically and commercially, for upon her return the Shuberts announced that their 39th Street theatre would henceforth bear the name of their great star.

In April, 1910, the Nazimova Theatre opened with a production of Ibsen's *Little Eyolf*, starring the actress as Rita Allmers. The critical reception was as favorable as it had been to the previous appearances of the actress, but difficulty was brewing between the actress and her managers. The exact nature of the affair is not known (these internal wrinkles were not as widely broadcast and discussed as such things are today), but Nazimova left the Shuberts and allied herself with Charles Frohman. He was one of those rare producers who seemed to be both a good business man and an artist. Tremendously active in New York and in London, at one time almost all of the great names were





Mme. Nazimova and Harry Ellerbe in a scene from Ibsen's *Ghosts*.

under his management, Frohman commuted back and forth on a scale since equalled only by Gilbert Miller in his most palmy days. His effect on the theatre was overpowering. The theatre lost one of its greatest when, on April 14, 1912, Charles Frohman was drowned on the *Titanic*.

It was at the Empire Theatre, which still stands at the south-east corner of Broadway and 40th Street, that Nazimova next appeared in *Bella Donna*. While not on the artistic level of the Ibsen plays, it met with great popular favor. It was the first of several mediocre plays that Nazimova made to seem much better by her artistry. During 1911, she appeared in *The Other Mary*, by Algernon Boyesen, and *the Marionettes*, adapted by Gladys Unger from a play of Pierre Wolff. It is an unfortunate, but true, comment that most of our great actresses and actors go through a phase in their careers during which they are involved with second-rate or lesser drama. Under a picture of Mme. Nazimova, which appeared in the *American* magazine of November, 1912, the editor wrote: "Alla Nazimova, who used to play a different role every night in a Russian repertory company—," and went on to comment on her current activity.

At this time, the actress was a star with a large following. The infant motion picture industry, which was making its first efforts to wrest supremacy from the stage, bid successfully for her talents. Nazimova must have been happy with this work. "Mark me," she wrote in June, 1912, "in an incredibly short time every stage artist, no matter of what renown or position, will be appearing before the lens and shutter, for they will realize that only by so

doing will they be able to make any enduring mark upon the artistic scrolls of their time." In many respects the accuracy of this prophecy would have surprised even Nazimova.

HER plays of the next few years were rather undistinguished. During 1915, she toured the vaudeville houses in a short play, *War Brides*. This was an ineffective peace plea written by Marion Craig Wentworth, which Nazimova hoped would assist in persuading the United States to stay out of the war which was ravaging Europe.

Limitations of space force one to rush over the intervening years to 1928. In October of that year, Nazimova allied herself with Eva Le Gallienne, who was then engaged upon her great work at the Civic Repertory Playhouse on New York's 14th Street. It is unnecessary, I believe, to retell here the details of that project. Miss Le Gallienne was producing the greatest plays of the greatest dramatists with good casts, and at prices within the reach of all. Mme. Nazimova appeared in the Civic Repertory production of Chekov's *The Cherry Orchard*.

Her next move was to the Theatre Guild. In March, 1930, she appeared as Natalie Petrovna in Ivan Turgenev's *A Month in the Country*. This was followed by appearances in O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*; Owen and Donald Davis' dramatization of Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth*; Laura Walker's adaptation of the Polish playwright, Marja M. Szczepkowska's, *Dr. Monica* (under another management); and in Bernard Shaw's *The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles*. While only the first of these was commercially successful, they all provided Nazimova

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with great personal success. Except, perhaps, for the Polish play, all of them were interesting and important productions.

On December 12, 1935, Mme. Nazimova arrived at the Empire Theatre as Mrs. Alving in Ibsen's *Ghosts*. Here was one of the greatest productions of the contemporary theatre. With McKay Morris as Pastor Manders and Harry Ellerbe as Oswald, the impression made by this *Ghosts* was overpowering. It was one of those rare occasions when one feels that one is in the presence of truly great art. A writer in the *New York Times* of that December made the interesting comment that "no other actress has played as many performances of Ibsen heroines as Nazimova. This despite the fact, if the records have been studied carefully, that seventeen years have elapsed since, in 1918, she gave her last season of Ibsen repertoire in this city, playing in the late winter of 1918, at the Plymouth Theatre, Nora in *A Doll's House*, Hedda in *Hedda Gabler*, Hedvig in *The Wild Duck*, and Hilda Wangell in *The Master Builder*.

Nazimova was to present only one other Ibsen characterization for the new generation of theatre-goers to see. In 1936, she again appeared as Hedda, with a company largely the same as the one with which she played *Ghosts*. Once again the highest critical praise was bestowed upon the production. Those of us who had never had the chance to see these plays performed, and had only read them, were amazed at the vitality and dramatic impact in the productions. Indeed, Nazimova and the company brought them alive as both dramatic and social documents of the greatest importance.

The final appearance of Nazimova on the New York stage was in Capek's *The Mother*. Unfortunately, the play closed after a run of only two or three performances. The actress went out to Hollywood, appearing in the films: *Escape*, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, *In Our Time*, and *Since You Went Away*. On July 13, 1945, she died, at the age of 66, of coronary thrombosis in a Hollywood hospital.

# Principles of Interior Decoration in Scene Design

The Third of a Series of Seven Articles on Designing Scenery for the Stage

By A. S. GILLETTE

Technical Director, State University of Iowa Theatre, Iowa City, Iowa.

**W**E have reached a critical point in our designing. Those who have had some art training will probably be able to go ahead with little trouble, but those individuals who lack that background are more or less at a complete impasse. They have studied the script and the stage, they know what the director would like and their research has unearthed many interesting features they would like to incorporate within their design, but they do not know how to assemble this material into a complete unit or how to go about it. Their question is all the same: Just how does one arrange the various architectural features of a room and then place furniture within it with any assurance that the finished setting will result in a satisfactory composition?

There are really two separate problems in the designing of any interior setting. One is the composition of the wall areas and the architectural features that are an inherent part of them such as doors, fireplaces or built-in bookcases. The second problem concerns itself with the objects resting on the floor (the furniture) and the relationship of these to each other and to the form of the room.

The interior decorator looks upon each of the four walls of a room as a separate problem in design, but he strives by one means or another to establish a sense of relationship between them. The scene designer approaches the problem in much the same manner except that he has a few additional problems facing him. His room will, nine chances out of ten, have three walls in place of four; he must contend with sight line demands; he will work on an exaggerated scale and in the back of his mind is the knowledge that this room must be dismantled and another take its place in a matter of but a few minutes.

The factors governing the arrangement of the wall areas are the fixed architectural features, objects suspended from the walls or that may be painted or applied in some other fashion, and finally those objects that are placed against the walls. The following partial list of the objects may be classified under these three headings:

Permanent fixtures	Suspended Objects	Free Standing Objects
Cornice	Draperies	Sofas
Crown moulding	Pictures	Sideboards
Picture moulding	Plaques	Secretaries
Plate rails	Wall fixtures	Desks
Panelling	Wall papers	Console

Chair rails	Tapestries	Tables
Dadoing	What-nots	Chairs
Base boards	Mirrors	Radios
Toe moulding	Clocks	Pianos
Doors	Flags	Bookcases
Windows	Signs	Filing cabinets
Fireplaces	Banners	Beds
Niches	Crests	Chests
Built-in furniture	Ornaments	Cupboards

**T**HE basic lines in a given room are the horizontal lines formed by the wall junction with the ceiling and floor and the vertical lines created by any change of plane as in the corner of a room. Here the scene designer has greater freedom than the interior decorator who must work with the fixed dimensions of a room that is already constructed. The scene designer, however, can establish his own basic lines by determining height, the width and the depth of his setting and is limited in so doing only by the physical dimensions of his stage and the demands of the play. His problem immediately becomes more interesting for he soon discovers that the kitchen he proposes to place on stage has

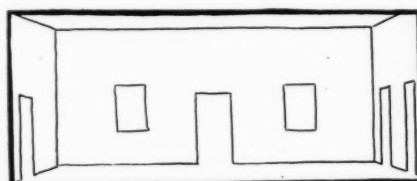


FIG. A

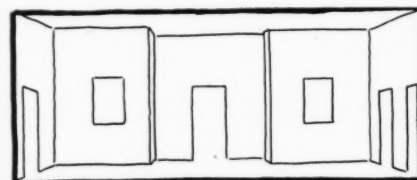


FIG. B

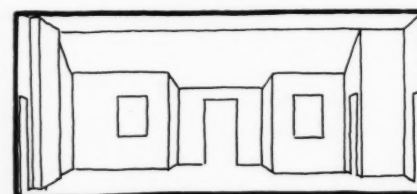


FIG. C



FIG. D

grown in size from an original that measured 12' wide, 14' long and 8' high to one that now measures 32' wide, 16' in depth and is now 14' high! He may be appalled at so much wall area and floor space and quite naturally wonders just how he can prevent his setting from looking like a nearly empty warehouse. This factor needn't worry him greatly for, since he has lost the services of his fourth wall, he finds this additional area a help, for into the three remaining walls he must now incorporate all of those architectural features normally found in four.

The unwary beginner usually starts his design with a simple box setting. It is literally that: two sides at right angles with the proscenium and a back wall that connects the two. Into these walls he has placed all of the fixed features required by the action of the play. Such an arrangement of unbroken wall areas, pierced more or less regularly by doors or windows, actually accentuates the apparent size of the room. More often than not this is the very effect that the designer has tried to avoid. Breaking up the flat wall surfaces of a setting by utilizing recesses and niches, projections or angles serves several very practical purposes. Each vertical line created by a break in plane in the walls counteracts and helps balance the dominating horizontal line created by the exaggerated length of the room. Each junction formed by such a break in the walls provides the technician with an opportunity of concealing a lashed joint. This means that the setting can be constructed in smaller units for easy handling and storage. And finally there is considerable more interest and variety within a set treated in this fashion.

The accompanying sketches illustrate this point rather clearly. Figure A illustrates the typical box setting with unbroken walls and a parade of doors and windows around its three sides. In Figure B the plan is essentially the same except that the central doorway in the back wall has been recessed, resulting in three equal divisions of this wall. This is not desirable as equal divisions lack interest and result in symmetrical balance. Such an effect is better suited to a play with a more formal quality than *Papa Is All*, of which we spoke in the two previous articles. In Figure C it will be noticed that the symmetrical balance has been destroyed by reducing the width of the stage left and center sections and enlarging that on stage right. The jog, or break of plane in the stage left wall, helped reduce the width of the adjoining rear wall and at the same time placed the two side wall doors in different planes. It will be noticed too that the height of the rear wall has been reduced by utilizing a raked or slanting ceiling over half of the setting. This feature adds more interest to the form of the room by introducing a diagonal line and at the same time permits us to use one of the features that seemed to be typical of this type of farm house. One other advantage



of the lowered rear wall is that it lessens the formal, stately quality usually associated with rooms with high ceilings. The arrangement of stove and stairway shown in Figure D have contributed further to the break down of symmetrical balance by being placed diagonally opposite each other. Although they differ in form and in color they balance in interest and in mass or area. The setting without one or the other would lack the sense of equilibrium now evident.

ONCE a satisfactory form for the setting has been obtained the problems of arranging the standing and the suspended objects more or less automatically solve themselves. Kitchen work benches beneath the windows add another horizontal line to the back wall which helps to reduce the apparent height of the wall and at the same time provides an excellent space for the many cooking utensils and hand props needed by Mamma. The wall space just down stage of the stove is the only remaining place for the necessary cupboard. Just off center stage right is placed the kitchen table with three chairs about it. Papa's arm chair, table and footstool are stage left of the table group. Two additional table chairs can be placed beside the rear door and against the wall jog down right. The wall telephone is located just upstage of the down right door. Copper pots and pans hang from the wall beneath the hood over the stove. A rack for coats and hats is stage left of the rear door. Lace curtains cover the lower half of each window. In the shed just beyond the main entrance is another workbench on which the hand water pump is placed. A towel, and old sweater, a slicker and a battered hat hang above it.

Remember that in connection with the composition of a room there are certain real and imaginary lines formed by the wall junctions and by the grouping of objects within the room or set. In order to avoid monotony it is necessary to vary both the direction and the character of these lines. The junctions formed by the various wall planes, of course, create very positive vertical lines, while standing objects such as cupboards, cabinets, bookcases or secretaries or any other object whose vertical measurement exceeds its width establishes a less obvious type of vertical line. Horizontal lines can be formed by base boards, chair rails, picture molding and similar architectural features while the equally effective imaginary horizontal lines can be created by terminating doors and windows at a given height above the floor or by grouping standing or suspended objects in such a fashion that they seem to be of equal height. Sofas, long tables, low desks, buffets or any property that is longer than it is high can help introduce additional horizontal lines just as the long workbenches across the back wall of our kitchen setting help to reduce the apparent height of the back wall. Additional interest and variety were

added to our sketch by the introduction of the diagonal lines found in the slanting ceiling line, the stair unit, and the hood above the stove.

It is desirable to have incorporated within a setting features that produce both horizontal and vertical lines and occasionally it is possible to vary these by either curved or diagonal lines. These basic vertical and horizontal lines should be arranged as evenly as possible on opposite walls so that they balance each other and thus avoid the possibility of one wall appearing more important and imposing than the other. A good point to remember is that an agreeable arrangement can usually be achieved by placing a vertical feature between two horizontal ones or by reversing this order.

It is very easy to overdo a setting with an excess of straight lines. This results in a room that has a stiff, rather uncomfortable appearance. This effect is evident in both drawings B and C.

When circumstances and the technical demands of the play will permit it, it is advisable to establish a focal point or dominant motif. An object such as an unusual fireplace, a principal entrance-way or an interesting window arrangement can be made into the focal point of your setting by the treatment given its form, its position and what is done to its size and color. As the term focal point implies, it is that feature or group of objects so situated within the arrangement of a setting that the eye automatically seeks it out. Referring once more to the accompanying sketches it will be seen that the main entrance center rear has become the focal point in drawing D. Additional interest was given to its form by employing a double Dutch door with unusual panelling. The door was wider than ordinary and had a hat rack attached to the inside face of the upper section which was visible to the audience when the door was closed. Through this doorway, which for the most part of the play remained open, the audience could see out into the the adjoining shed with its water pump and the decorative props hanging on the wall above the workbench. The outside screen door to the shed was placed out of sight lines although the audience could catch a glimpse of it through the window and hear it slam shut with each entrance and exit. These factors when taken together gave enough interest to this unit so that it served as a satisfactory focal point.

The matter of grouping furniture on stage can be expedited if the designer will remember that groups with uneven numbers can be placed in more interesting arrangements than those containing an even number. This principle is shown to good advantage by the group of three chairs about the table, and Papa's chair.

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Play Department

## LONGMANS, GREEN AND COMPANY

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A FEW hints on the matter of color may not be out of order at this point. It is difficult to formulate any set of rigid rules as far as the designing for the stage is concerned for there are any number of cases that prove to be exceptions. But in general the beginner may profit by the following suggestions on color harmony.

- a. Various shades and tints of the same hue may be used together in any proportion.
- b. Complimentary hues combine best when they are used in unequal proportions.
- c. Adjoining hues of the color wheel, called analogous hues, may be used together in any proportion provided they are used alone.
- d. Very dark hues may be used together in almost any proportion. The same holds true for very light tints and for combinations of neutrals.
- e. Saturated hues may be used with neutrals provided the neutral tones predominate.
- f. A neutral background may be used to tie together smaller areas of saturated hues that would otherwise clash.
- g. Select color accents for the properties that are complimentary to the backgrounds.
- h. For the majority of cases the more neutral tones are reserved for the wall areas, the darkest for the floor coverings and the lightest for the ceiling.
- i. If the wall coverings are finished in patterned figures, it is well to select draperies and upholstery of plain materials or you may use patterned drapes and upholstery when the backgrounds are plain.
- j. Simple color schemes of a few well chosen hues are more effective than elaborate color schemes of many hues.
- k. Learn to exaggerate in your use of color. Remember that your setting will be seen from a great distance and under colored lights.

(Mr. Gillette's fourth article of this series will appear in our February issue.—Editor)

# Choosing the One-Act Play

The Third in a Series of Articles on the One-Act Play

By TALBOT PEARSON

Department of Drama, Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, Pa.

IT would seem superfluous to remind the director that the choice of play is half the battle. It may be more original to add that the less experienced you are, the more necessary is the best possible script.

What then is a "good" play? Quite recently, in my capacity as critic-judge of a high school drama festival, I had to comment unfavorably upon the choice of one of the competing teams, saying that they (or rather, their director) had elected to produce a "bad" play. I used the word to mean that their material was not worthy of them but the offended players confronted me with testimonials from their local ministers to the effect that the piece was perfectly "moral" and that, therefore, I was all wrong. It could not be a "bad" play.

So much for an unfortunate choice of words. A good play, as we shall understand it, is one which measures up to certain accepted standards of quality—in the writing, the theme, the dramatic values and truth of characterization, and in acceptability to an audience. To discover all these calls for a rather special technique.

You will have to read many plays before you find the right one for your purpose. It will be time well spent. You are going to demand several weeks of concentrated attention from your students and this must be justified by the results. It is unfair to waste their time, and yours, on a script of poor quality.

I have put the writing at the head of the list of requirements. The same demands will be made of the play that you make of the short story. It should possess literary quality if it is to have educational value. It should tend to raise standards of speech and vocabulary.

Your students may have no other idea than "to put on a show," while you are considering the teaching value of the experience they will have. This will include the study of characters and situations which deepen their emotional capabilities, the glimpsing of new horizons through the manners and customs of other lives and occupations, but above all exposing them to precise and accurate word usage.

Some of us may carry this idea too far so as to exclude entirely the use of "dialect." The dialect play, as such, is not undesirable and deserves consideration. The Irish plays of Lady Gregory, Yeats, and Synge are classics and are completely, for the most part, in dialect. It is our native American plays which often defeat our objective by exhibiting characters as protagonists who "moider" their

mother tongue for no good reason at all.

There are plenty of plays written in accurate, forceful English which do not descend to bad grammar or bathos. I hope you will do your students a favor by allowing them to speak well-written and literate dialogue.

Literate, yes, but not sham "literary." You will want to avoid pedantry and "fine writing" as you will shun vulgarity and cheap sentiment. Leave out both the sham poetry and the soap opera.

Now comes the consideration of the theme. Far too many one-act plays concern themselves with too many ideas. In a three-act piece there may be several of these, all related or supporting the main theme. In a one-act there is no time for more than one and you will try to discover this and notice how the author keeps his concentration upon it. The ability to do this is essential to good play-writing.

YOU will not read a play as you read a novel, a serial or a short story. The serial or story will, for one thing, probably have illustrations; the play will not. Obviously the first requirement which you, as a reader, must possess is imagination. You must be able to hear the dialogue and see the action, and you should also be able to picture the lines of the characters as they have lived up to the time the play begins.

The author of the novel or short story supplies a host of details about his characters; how they feel and think, what they wear. Little of this can occur in the play's dialogue, except by implication or in brief remarks by other characters. You have to discover for yourself what were the environments which gave them motivation, their relationship to each other and the previous unimportant happenings which decided that they should finally meet, on your stage, for a brief thirty or forty minutes of concentrated and explosive drama.

Notice the word "concentrated." That is the first element to look for, the author's ability to hew to the line, to keep his attention (and therefore yours and your audience's) on one single theme or controlling idea. In a three-act play there may be several related ideas embroidering the central theme. In a one-act there can be only one. And there must be conflict, either of motives or of personalities and preferably the conflict should arise from within the characters themselves.

Before going further, and in order to start you off on this business of reading plays with a director's eye, let me suggest that you examine a play such as *Trifles*

by Susan Glaspell. Perhaps you have already read it, more likely seen it played. It is a gem of its kind. It has a powerful central theme. You can visualize the complete life history of all the characters from their terse conversation and you have a vivid picture of the two principals—the heroine and the villain—who never even appeared on the stage. All this is achieved with tremendous emotional and dramatic suspense in a brief thirty-five minutes of drama.

A similar economy of writing is evident in John William Rogers' *Judge Lynch*, in which the audience at first is completely in the dark, then seizes on the subtle hints concealed in the dialogue and finally discovers the tragic miscarriage of justice just before the curtain falls. The climax is wordless. Moreover, the audience is enabled, through the skill of the playwright, to perceive the truth ahead of the characters on the stage. That virtue in dramatic writing is not essential to the writing of a play which is to pass our test, but it is evidence of skill in dramaturgy.

An audience should never be fooled. As you read the play your imagination must place you out there in front, seeing and hearing it for the first time, and you should be flattered and encouraged to feel yourself always one jump ahead of the actors and therefore superior to them.

Can you do this? Can you look for those elements of suspense in the plays you read; can you be both actor and audience and preserve a proper balance?

I have given two examples of realistic drama to support my contention that a central theme is all-important, and one that is undisturbed by contradicting or confusing cross-currents. With melodramas the plot and the action is predominant; the conflict should arise from without, not within, the characters. If you are choosing a melodrama you will look for plenty of action, plausible, of course, otherwise you are on the borderline of farce and one unexpected laugh will shatter your whole dramatic structure.

If it is a farce you want, or a comedy, you look for dialogue, situations and characterizations that will amuse. The comedy, to qualify as such, will contain an idea as well as some plot, but the farce can be as improbable as you and the author decide to make it, provided the results are amusing to the audience.

In addition to the ability to discern the central theme of the play, the next exercise of your imagination will come in the relationship of the characters to each other, and how their actions and speech serve to progress the story and embellish the theme. You will have to see them and hear them as you read. Are they dull and vapid, or are you (as a potential member of your audience) vitally interested in what is happening and may happen to them?

Personally, I place great importance upon this. I am quite willing to overlook some weakness in the statement of



the theme, or even a lack of conflict, provided I can become interested in the characters as human beings.

You may not share my regard for this point, but you are counselled to remember that the secret of the phenomenal daily audience for our comic-strip heroes and heroines arises from the personal interest which America takes in their every thought and word. They are only drawings on paper, but they seem three-dimensional compared to the cardboard characters in many regrettable plays.

I am not unmindful that it has taken several years to build up the audience for many of these heroes of the "funnies" and we must do our job with the one-act characters in forty minutes. It is a challenge that we cannot escape. Will these characters, enacted by students with limited technical equipment, be able to command the audience's attention while the theme is developed to the climax?

**T**HUS far we have been subjecting our potential choice of play to a very severe examination, measuring it by an established yardstick for dramatic values and excellence of treatment. If we are considering a new play either by an established or a student author, this searching test is vitally necessary. With the published play, especially by an author of eminence, such extreme caution may not be so essential.

The mere fact of having been published does not guarantee the quality of a play, nor that it will measure up to your standards. The catalogues of such publishers as Samuel French, Dramatist Play Service, Walter H. Baker Co., Row, Peterson and Co., Dramatic Publishing Co., and others, contain thousands of play titles. Public libraries do not have copies of all of these and no school library could afford to keep up-to-date on dramatic publications. To select a number at random, intrigued by attractive titles, might be a costly investment; not a single one might prove suitable.

There are a number of bibliographies which suggest plays which have passed all the tests of both reading and public performance. One of the best of these comes in *The Stage and the School*, by Katherine Ommanney. This book was published several years ago and therefore will not contain many recent plays, but as very few first one-acts have been written within the past fifteen years, Miss Ommanney's list will be adequate for basic reading.

Good farces in one-act form are not plentiful, but a few classic examples may be mentioned. Anton Tchekov's *The Boor* and *The Marriage Proposal* are wildly extravagant. A. A. Milne's *Wurzel-Flummery* proposes a ridiculous idea and works it out in logical manner. George S. Kaufman's *The Still Alarm* is without any point at all but contrives to be hilarious because of its implausibility.

Comedies such as Susan Glaspell's

*Suppressed Desires*, J. M. Barrie's *The Twelve Pound Look* or A. A. Milne's *The Boy Comes Home* should be read for the discovery of the basic principles of this type. The situations are true to life, the conversation witty and the happy ending is always just around the corner.

Your reading of dramas, the most successful form of one-act and the easiest to perform, should include all the O'Neill sea plays (*Bound East for Cardiff*, etc.), Lady Gregory's Irish pieces, *The Valiant*, by Hall and Middlemass, *The No 'Count Boy*, by Paul Green, and *Confessional*, by Percival Wilde.

The experienced director will have seen or performed all of these. To the less experienced practitioner such plays are required reading. They will all pass the tests we have set for our ideal one-act production and they will, of themselves, say more and say it better than I can.

**T**HERE remain some practical considerations to be pondered. Your imagination will have pictured the action taking place in a certain scene. Are your resources sufficient to make this effective?

Don't be too easily deterred by scenic difficulties but do not feel that because the author's instructions call for this and that in the way of scenery and properties that you have to be realistic down to the last detail. Lady Gregory's Irish peasants can be effective without a real peat fire and O'Neill's sailors can be just as forceful without tattooed chests and arms. Leave something to the imagination of the audience and concentrate on tasteful suggestion rather than realism à la Belasco. Hew to the line, remember your central idea and use only those props or sound effects you deem essential to the development of that theme.

Resources of acting material will also be your concern. While even young players will respond more gallantly to the challenge of a difficult part than a poorly written or facile one, we must recognize that certain characterizations are beyond the limits of their emotional experience. Also that plays in foreign locales, while the playing of them may enlarge the players' horizons, may be difficult to project to our audiences and so may fail of their intent.

Lastly a word about royalties—or otherwise. The catalogues of the publishers I have mentioned contain many

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Set your sights a little higher, therefore, and choose a play on which a royalty is demanded and pay it cheerfully even if you have to economize somewhere else. Above all, don't rehearse and perform a copyrighted play without payment. That is both illegal and unethical, and as Hamlet said of another form of theatre transgression, "It shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it."

None of you, of course, will need this warning, but it might be well to pass along to your students. When you ask them to sell extra tickets to pay the royalty fees they will get a practical demonstration of the rights of property.

In the course of the succeeding four articles I hope to be able to make some suggestions as to the practical handling of problems which arise in the production of various type of plays, and I shall try to show the differing approaches to the business of interpreting an author to an audience.

# The Birth of the Song "Silent Night"

## A Drama for School Public Address Systems

By FLORENCE FELTEN FRENCH

CHARACTERS: Narrator, Father Gruber, Mother Gruber, Franz Gruber, Elizabeth Gruber, Berta, Pastor Mohr, First Pastor.

ANNOUNCER (Your usual opening.)

(MUSIC: *Fade in organ playing "Silent Night"; cross fade to man humming same tune; sustain briefly, then fade and sneak out under following.*)

NARRATOR: Let me tell you about the man who is humming that tune. His name is Franz Xavier Gruber. Just one hundred twenty-eight years ago tonight (*Christmas Eve, 1946*), he hummed that tune for the first time . . . it was his tune . . . and his choir would sing it in the little church in Oberndorf, Austria. Otherwise you would never have heard of him. He was once an ordinary boy . . . but a boy with nimble fingers . . . for weaving with his father and two older brothers . . . and for something else which was a secret between his mother and himself. They lived in Hochburg, near the Danube. (*Fading.*) This ordinary peasant family of weavers . . .

Father Gruber: I'm proud of you, Franz. And to be perfectly frank with you, for a boy of twelve, your weaving is far finer than that of your two older brothers. One of these days, you'll be a great weaver, my son.

Franz (*Tensely.*): Please don't say that, Father. I can't stand the thought of weaving much longer.

Father Gruber (*Authoritatively.*): That's enough, Franz. Do you realize you're speaking to your father?

Franz (*Apologetically.*): I'm sorry, Father.

Father Gruber: I'm partly to blame. I should know better than to praise you. It never pays. . . . What have you there, Mamma?

Mother Gruber (*Fading in*): They're Franz's wooden pegs, Joseph. He had them in the wall behind his bed. I'm sorry, Franzl. They broke off when I made your bed.

Father Gruber (*Angrily.*): In the wall, Anna? Franz, did you cut a hole in the wall for these pegs?

Franz: Yes, I did, but . . .

Father Gruber (*Interrupting.*): That's enough. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Franz! I have too much to do already keeping up the house! And now you add to my trouble by deliberately spoiling the wall.

Franz (*Insistently.*): Please let me explain! I didn't mean to spoil the wall. I just put these pieces of wood there to practice finger exercises.

Father Gruber (*Explosively.*): Finger exercises! So! You don't get enough finger exercises in your weaving. I'll see to it that you get more!

Franz (*Excitedly.*): Oh, no, no, Father! Don't give me any more weaving. I couldn't stand it! It's a different kind of finger exercise I need. Using these wooden pegs keeps me in practice for spinet and organ playing.

Father Gruber (*Impatiently puzzled.*): What do you mean? . . . we've no spinet . . . we've no organ!

Franz (*Struggling.*): I know. But I go to Herr Peterlechner's. He lets me use his. He even teaches me how to play.

Father Gruber (*Explosively.*): Teaches you! And who pays for these lessons?

Franz (*Quietly.*): He doesn't charge me anything.

Father Gruber (*With exasperation.*): Franz, you should know better than to accept lessons from Andreas Peterlechner. He's a teacher and should be paid!

Mother Gruber: Come, come, Joseph. Don't be so hard on Franzl. You should be pleased that he wants to learn. Don't scold him for it.

Father Gruber (*Impatiently.*): Anna, you stay out of this! In this family we pay for what we get!

Mother Gruber: All right, Joseph. Then I'll make it up to Herr Peterlechner. Franzl, you can take over some fresh coffee kuchen when you go for your lesson tonight.

Father Gruber: You'll do nothing of the kind, Anna. Franz, you're not going for your lesson tonight or any other night!

Mother Gruber: Oh, Papa, be reasonable. Franzl must go tonight. He's promised Herr Peterlechner to take his place at the church organ tomorrow morning. Poor Herr Peterlechner has been sick all week.

Father Gruber (*Unbelievably.*): Anna, what are you saying? Franz—play the organ for the service? I won't have it, I tell you. It's bad enough to have him disgrace us at home . . . but in public . . . that's too much!

Mother Gruber (*Firmly.*): Who said he was going to disgrace us? Just wait and see . . . you'll be proud of him. But now let's stop arguing. It's time for supper. . . . Franzl will have to hurry to get to his lesson on time. While you wash up, I'll put the soup on the table.

(MUSIC: *Organ playing church music of period suggestive of Franz playing in church; swelling to climax, then fading out.*)

Father Gruber (*Reproachfully.*): Ach, Anna. You shouldn't have strutted so! Now the whole congregation knows you're as proud as a peacock!

Mother Gruber (*Defensively.*): Why shouldn't they? I want them to know that I'm proud of our Franzl. How many children twelve years old could play the organ the way he did? Answer me that!

Father Gruber: Not any around here!

Mother Gruber (*Reprovingly.*): Joseph, I told you not to scold him for trying to learn.

Father Gruber (*Repentantly.*): All right, I admit I was wrong. I'll make up for it, Anna.

Mother Gruber: But how can you, after the way you talked to him last night?

Father Gruber (*Confidently.*): Never you fear, Anna, I can do it. I've made plans on my way back from church. Did you see the spinet in Bruger's window?

Mother Gruber (*Uninterestedly.*): No, I never even looked in the window. (*Proudly.*) All I could think of was how well Franzl played and how surprised people were.

Father Gruber (*Pointedly.*): That's the very thing that made me look at the spinet. I mean to buy it for him.

Mother Gruber (*Incredulously.*): Buy it! Don't talk foolishly. Poor folks like us buying a spinet. People would think we'd gone crazy!!

Father Gruber (*Reassuringly.*): No, they wouldn't. And it doesn't cost so much—only five gulden.

Mother Gruber (*Mockingly.*): Only five gulden! Why, we don't have that much to our name!

Father Gruber (*Confidently.*): No . . . but I know how we can get it. Now is the time . . . during the holiday season . . . when folks buy

more linens. I'll do extra weaving nights.

Mother Gruber (*Tearfully pleased.*): Oh, Joseph, I could cry. You are a good man. (*Quickly.*) Look here . . . why couldn't I earn something too . . . my cookies aren't too bad. . . . I could bake Christmas cookies and sell them.

Father Gruber (*Encouragingly.*): "Too bad!" They're the best in the neighborhood, Anna! We'll make so much . . . I'll tell you what we'll do. . . .

Mother Gruber: What more?

Father Gruber (*With growing excitement.*): We'll save everything we make more than five gulden . . . we'll start a fund to send Franz to Burghausen.

Mother Gruber (*Puzzled.*): Why in the world do you want to send him away?

Father Gruber: That's where the great teacher, George Hartdobler, lives. Franz must be apprenticed to him.

Mother Gruber (*Unbelievably.*): How you've changed since last night! I can hardly believe my ears. . . .

Father Gruber (*Annoyed.*): Don't fuss, Anna. . . .

Mother Gruber (*Hastily interrupting.*): Ach, no, Joseph. I only mean I'm so happy you've these wonderful plans for Franzl . . . (*worried*) still . . . the other children . . . we have them to think of too. It's hardly fair to them to give Franzl so much and them so little. . . .

Father Gruber (*Impatiently interrupting.*): You can always find something to worry about, can't you, Anna? Doesn't it occur to you that they, too, will be proud of a famous brother?

Mother Gruber (*Warningly.*): Famous! Now you're building castles too high in the air. Watch out, Joseph. They'll topple over.

(MUSIC: *Sneak in organ playing a few Bach exercises: Seque to more difficult compositions of period suggesting real musical accomplishment, fading off with music with a love motif.*)

Elizabeth (*Enthusiastically.*): What a big day this has been for you, Franzl!

Franz: I'm glad you could come, Elizabeth. If only my father and mother could have been here too! You know it was Father's idea that I come to study under Herr Hartdobler. Now that I have my diploma, Father's dreams are realized.

Elizabeth: And in only one year, Franzl! It is too bad they couldn't come. How proud they would have been. What honors heaped upon you. I've never heard you play better!

Franz (*Really pleased.*): I'm glad if you thought so!

Elizabeth (*Earnestly.*): I surely did. But, Franzl . . . what are you hiding behind your back?

Franz (*Hesitatingly.*): It's a surprise I got today. I brought it along because I thought it might interest you, too.

Elizabeth (*Delightedly.*): Oh, has it something to do with me?

Franz (*Hesitatingly.*): I'd like to think it does. But I guess you'll have to decide that.

Elizabeth: My, are you mysterious today. (*SOUND: Unwrapping of paper with following line.*) Come . . . let's see it. . . . How disappointing! Just a piece of paper!

Franz: But read it, Elizabeth. It's my appointment to teach at Arnsdorf.

Elizabeth: An appointment so soon! How splendid! Tell me about it!

Franz: There isn't much to tell. I'll be the typical country school teacher.

Elizabeth: And you'll have a choirmaster post, I hope?

Franz: Unfortunately, no. But Herr Hartdobler says there's a church only two miles away . . . in Oberdorf . . . something may turn up there.

Elizabeth: He ought to know. Oh, I'm sure there'll be an opening. Then why do you look so glum, Franzl? You don't seem a bit happy over it.

Franz (*Struggling.*): Well . . . you see, there's a large apartment in the schoolhouse. . . . I can't help feeling I'd be lonesome in such a big place. I've been wondering . . . of course I

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haven't much to offer . . . a small salary . . . a house for you and your children . . . a regular job . . . that's all . . . but . . . well, Elizabeth, would you marry me and live there with me?

Elizabeth (*Starting to cry*): Oh, Franz! . . . Franz (*Interrupting hastily*): Please don't cry . . .

Elizabeth: Franzl, dear, you don't understand.

Franz (*Dejectedly*): I was afraid it would be this way. That's why I've waited so long.

Elizabeth (*Triumphantly through her tears*): Franzl, dear, I'm the one who has waited so long. I'd given up hope. I told myself . . . why should Franzl, just reaching manhood, marry a widow with two children. . . .

Franz: Oh, Elizabeth . . . how could you harbor such thoughts . . . when I'm so fond of Kitty and Berta? But will they want me for a father?

Elizabeth: Franzl, darling, they'll adore you for a father! And I . . . I'm the happiest woman alive! I'd love to live in that house with you!

(MUSIC: *Punctuate Elizabeth's final line with full swelling organ chords expressive of the thrill Franz has when Elizabeth assents; segue to peaceful family type of music in period; sneak out.* SOUND: [*off mike, gradually fading in—simultaneously*] beat of horses' hoofs, sleigh bells, crunch of snow; then man's voice calling [*off mike*] "Whoa." Cut sound.)

Franz (*Calling off mike*): Mama, have Kitty wear her warm scarf. Hurry, everybody—the sleigh's here. Berta, you can't carry such a big basket even if you are the oldest child. Mama, put on your warm coat.

Elizabeth (*Answering off mike, then gradually fading in*): Franz, how silly. I should know how to dress for Christmas in Arnsdorf. (*On mike*.) After all, this is the eleventh Christmas we've taken baskets to the poor.

Franz (*Reminiscently*): Yes, Mama. Eleven years we've been here. Now Berta is old enough for a midnight service. This big house . . . so full of children's laughter these eleven years. How would I have lived in it alone?

Elizabeth (*Appreciatively*): Franzl, we've so much to be thankful for. Why, the children's own father couldn't have done more for them than you have. (*Directly and quickly*.) There, now. All the baskets are packed in the sleigh. Here we go, children. . . . Come on, Papa . . . don't be so slow.

(SOUND: [*Simultaneously with "Don't be so slow" sneak in*] crunch of snow and approaching footsteps; continue through Elizabeth's line "Oh, yes, do come with us, Joseph.")

Franz: Don't be in such a hurry, Mama. . . . Here comes Pastor Mohr.

Elizabeth: What brings him from Oberdorf on the day before Christmas?

Children's Voices (*Simultaneously*): You came just in time. Do get into the sleigh with us, Pastor Mohr. We're just ready to start. Here's a basket for you to give.

Elizabeth: Oh, yes, do come with us, Joseph.

Mohr: Thank you, Elizabeth. I am tempted . . . but I've come on pressing business to see your husband.

Elizabeth (*Disappointed*): Oh, dear me, then Franz can't come, either?

Franz (*Reprovingly*): Elizabeth, you surprise me. Where are your manners.

Elizabeth (*Apologetically*): Please excuse me, Joseph. . . . Oh, I do hope no one has died this time of year!

Mohr: Oh, no, nothing like that. (*Lightly*.) I come on a pleasant mission. I've brought a present . . . and I want Franz to do it up in a holiday wrapping. It's for everyone who comes to the midnight service tonight.

Children's Voices (*Simultaneously*): Think of that! I'm glad I'm old enough to stay up late now. I wish I could go too, Papa. I wonder what the present is. Maybe I can go next year.

Berta: Oh, Pastor Mohr. I can't believe it . . . you're only joking.

Mohr (*Laughing*): What a doubting child you have, Franz.

Franz (*Jokingly*): Berta takes after her mother.

Elizabeth (*Bantering*): How mean you are, Franz.

Berta (*Seriously*): But, Pastor Mohr . . . It'd have to be a big present for the whole congregation . . . and I don't see you carrying any.

Mohr (*Reassuringly*): I have one, Berta. It's right here in my pocket.

Berta (*With wonder*): Mama, to have so much from something so small . . . why, it sounds like a miracle to me . . .

Elizabeth: Perhaps it is a miracle, Berta. Miracles have happened before at Christmas time. (*Quickly*.) But now let's get back into the sleigh again, children. It's starting to snow. We'll have to hurry. Good-bye.

(SOUND: [*Begin simultaneously on mike and fade out at end of chorus of Children's Voices*] Horses' hoofs, crunch of snow, sleigh bells.)

Children's Voices (*Simultaneously on mike; fade gradually 'til completely off*): Isn't it exciting! Oh, I can hardly wait! How I wish I could go. Let's see if we can guess. Wish you were coming along! Good-bye. Good-bye.

(SOUND: Cut.)

Franz (*Curiously*): Joseph, what in the world is this mysterious present you have for all of us?

Mohr: Before I tell you, Franz, I want a promise.

Franz: But, Joseph, how can I promise when I don't know what I'm promising?

Mohr: I wouldn't ask it, Franz, if I didn't know that you could carry it out.

Franz: Well, all right, Joseph. I promise. Now, what is it?

Mohr: Do you remember at our last choir rehearsal . . . I said we needed a new Christmas song?

Franz (*Vaguely remembering*): Y-es.

Mohr: I wasn't joking. Here are the words. That's my present. Yours will be the music.

Franz (*Unbelievingly*): You want me to write the music?

Mohr: Yes. Why not? You've composed songs before.

Franz (*Modestly*): Yes, but never in such a short time. Tell me . . . who wrote the words?

Mohr (*Quietly*): I did.

Franz (*Matter-of-factly*): Let's go into my study. . . . (*Suddenly awakening to Mohr's words*.) What? You wrote them, Joseph? I didn't know you wrote poetry.

Mohr (*Modestly*): Oh, occasionally. (*Hesitatingly*.) May I—read you the first verse?

Franz: Do read it!

Mohr (*Reading*):

Silent Night! Holy Night!

All is calm, all is bright

Round yon Virgin Mother and Child.

Holy Infant so tender and mild,

Sleep in heavenly peace,

Sleep in heavenly peace.

Franz (*Genuinely impressed*): Beautiful! To think you can write poetry like that!

Mohr (*Modestly*): Oh it's nothing wonderful.

Franz: Indeed it is! It's remarkable!

Mohr (*Appreciatively*): I'm pleased you like it. (*Persistently*.) And now, Franz . . . your promise . . . the music.

Franz: Good heavens, man. It's five now. Only six more hours before the midnight service. I'm not a magician, Joseph. I'm a mere musician.

Mohr (*Laughingly*): I know. I wouldn't have brought it to you, were you a magician. (*Pleading earnestly*.) I just want a simple melody. You can do it easily.

Franz (*Dubiously*): No, Joseph, I'm afraid I can't.

Joseph: Of course you can. I'll sit next to the spinet. Then I can help you with the words while you pick out the notes.

Franz: You're bound to have your own way, aren't you? (*Suddenly relieved at a new thought*.) But, Joseph . . . you know the mice gorged themselves on the organ . . . it's out of commission . . . we can't use it tonight.

Mohr: I know it's not working. But the

organ builder is there now trying to fix it.

Franz (*Still doubtful*): It's in bad shape. Can he have it ready for tonight?

Mohr: No, frankly, he can't. It'd take another week at least.

Franz (*Greatly relieved*): Well, then, Joseph. It's out of the question . . . we can't possibly do this thing for tonight . . . next Christmas . . . I'd be glad to plan on that.

Mohr: But I've my heart set on it for tonight. (*Suddenly inspired*.) I know what we can do!

Franz: What?

Mohr: We can do without the organ!

Franz (*Firmly*): I'm sorry to disappoint you, Joseph, but I wouldn't think of trying a new song without accompaniment.

Mohr: Oh, of course not, I didn't mean that . . . but that guitar on the wall . . . you play that, don't you?

Franz (*Feeling trapped*): Yes . . . but . . . now, Joseph, I can't play that guitar at the service . . . if that's what you're thinking.

Mohr: But why not? It'll be novel! The people will never forget it. . . . Come now, say you'll do it. Remember . . . you promised.

Franz: I know I promised, Joseph. But it's too short a time. . . . I can't do it. . . . (*Suddenly touched by his friend's disappointment*.) Oh well, don't look so glum. . . . I'll try, Joseph.

Mohr: Oh, thank you, Franz! You'll never know what this means to me. Just write the guitar accompaniment and several parts so that we can lead the boys' choir in singing it. If you come just a few minutes earlier than usual, we'll have time for practice.

Franz (*Laughingly*): Joseph, what an optimist you are!

Mohr (*Enthusiastically*): What a musician you are! I've known so for a long time. (*Fading*.) Now the whole congregation will know it tonight. Auf Wiedersehen, Franz.

Franz (*Fading*): Auf Wiedersehen.

(SOUND: *Fade in ringing of church bells calling people to service; Sustain briefly; Fading under with:*)

Berta (*Hushed voice of wonder*): Oh, Mama, isn't the church beautiful tonight?

Elizabeth: Lovelier than I've ever seen it before, Berta.

Berta: Mama—what a big tree! Look at those little wooden men under it.

Elizabeth: They're the carved figures of the three wise men.

Berta: See . . . they have something in their hands, Mama.

Elizabeth: Gifts, Berta, for the Christ Child.

Berta: Mama, do you know what gift Pastor Mohr has for us? The one he asked Papa to wrap?

Elizabeth: No, dear, it's a secret between the two of them. You'll soon know. Here comes the Pastor now.

Berta: But, Mama, where's Pastor Mohr? I thought he'd conduct the service.

Elizabeth (*In hushed voice*): Oh no, you see, he's the assistant pastor, and for the Christmas Eve service, he's needed to help your father with the choir boys. (*Fading*.) Sh-h-h, Berta . . . the Pastor. . . .

First Pastor (*In even rhythm: full rich tones*): How happy we all are tonight as we gather to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child. Of all nights in the year, this is the most holy. But tonight is not only the most holy of this whole year . . . but of all our years together, for it brings to us the birth of a beautiful new Christmas song . . . a song written and composed in our very midst by our beloved assistant pastor and our cherished choir director. It is a melody which should make the words, "Silent Night! Holy Night!" forever a part of Christmas.

(MUSIC: *Chorus at first with guitar accompaniment then organ: Eight voices singing with guitar accompaniment.*)

Silent Night! Holy Night!

All is calm, all is bright

(*Sneak in organ accompaniment, with more voices.*)

(Continued on page 22)

# Theatre on Broadway

By PAUL MYERS

264 Lexington Ave., New York City

Readers of this magazine may order tickets for Broadway plays through Mr. Myers. Request should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

IF the autumn of the theatrical season of 1946-47 is to be remembered at all, it will be as "the season of revivals." It is not that new plays are not being produced but, in the main, the productions of the several revivals now current in New York have been (and are) vastly more successful. One of the most important events of the early season has been the opening of Eugene O'Neill's, *The Iceman Cometh*, which has been accorded a most interesting critical reception. Being, as it is, the first new play of this key figure in the American theatre in over a decade the play had been more than eagerly awaited. Up to the time of this writing I have been able only to read the review of the production will have to be deferred until the next issue. All of the other plays which have bowed before New York audiences during the past month have been greeted with great dissatisfaction, but the revivals (with the single exception of a miserable re-staging of Aristophanes *Lysistrata*) have been highly successful.

## Lady Windermere's Fan

One of the most delightful of these productions has been that of Oscar Wilde's, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, which came to New York after playing before pleased audiences on the Pacific Coast. Homer Curran, the California theatre owner and producer, in association with Russell Lewis and Howard Young, have lavished upon Wilde's well-remembered masterpiece everything possible in theatrical production. A superb cast has been assembled and placed under the direction of one experienced in this style of drama. The whole has been set inside costumes and rooms designed by Cecil Beaton, whose flair for the over-elegant in design is world famous. Mr. Beaton performed a similar chore for the distinguished revival of the play which John Gielgud and his company presented in London not very long ago. One can hardly express the beauty in which Mr. Beaton has encased the play. Though not obtrusive; it is so important a feature of the present revival that one cannot but comment upon it. He has caught all the artificiality, the sumptuousness, the frippery of the society of which, and for which, Wilde wrote his play over fifty years ago.

Most of us are familiar with the story of how Mrs. Erlynne saves her daughter, Lady Windermere, from making the same sort of mistake which had killed her socially a generation before. In doing so, however, she almost ruins once and for all her own chance of returning to

the world she knew. It is a plot which has been made familiar through a multitude of variations but which has never been turned more successfully than in this instance by Wilde. He has garnished the bare structure of the plot with his superb effect of phraseology and with his great gift of being able to make the most shallow individuals highly entertaining. Lord Darlington, the completely artificial Duchess of Berwick, Lord Augustus Lorton, Cecil Graham and the guests who assemble in the Windermere drawing-room are all personages who, accorded treatment by a less brilliant writer, would be deadly bores. Speaking the lines supplied by this master of the comedy-of-manners, they are as diverting an assemblage as one could have the good fortune to find one's self among.

It is reported that when Sir George Alexander first presented *Lady Windermere's Fan* at St. James' Theatre in London in 1892, the identity of the actress playing Mrs. Erlynne was concealed until after the play had been performed a couple of times. It was then announced that Marion Terry, of the famous English theatrical family, was the actress. No such ruse has been employed in this instance. It was announced as soon as the casting had been concluded that Cornelia Otis Skinner (also of a famous theatrical family) would play the role in the most recent production. She plays the role magnificently—with great tenderness and warmth but always aware of the conventions of the play. One feels all the tragedy in her life and her love for her daughter without being treated to any of the bathos which, when played by a lesser actress, the role leans toward. The title role is played by Penelope Ward, who is making her third appearance in the United States. The male roles are very smoothly played by Henry Daniell as Lord Windermere, John Buckmaster as Lord Darlington, Rex Evans as Lord Augustus Lorton, Stanley Bell as Mr. Hopper, Jack Merivale as Sir James Royston and Cecil Beaton (proving still further artistic versatility) as Cecil Graham. A word must be spoken, too, for the delightful impersonation of the Duchess of Berwick by Estelle Winwood, an acknowledged mistress of the art of playing the comedy manners. Her performance in this and in the charming production of the same playwright's *The Importance of Being Earnest* several seasons ago attest to this. Jack Minster is responsible for the direction of one of the pleasantest productions to have come our way in too long a time.

## Cyrano de Bergerac

JOSÉ Ferrer, the Iago of the recent staging of *Othello*, has turned his attention to something quite different. He has brought back into the theatre the master-

piece of the nineteenth and early twentieth century French writer, Edmond Rostand, *Cyrano de Bergerac*. It is difficult to bear in mind the fact that this play was given its premiere performance five years later than the Oscar Wilde comedy just discussed. It is in style and setting so much a part of the days of the cavaliers that one thinks of it as an expression of that era. First performed by Coquelin, it has held the stage as a favorite ever since. Of late years it had become in America almost the exclusive property of Walter Hampden, who has played it the length and breadth of the land. Mr. Ferrer has performed a great service in revitalizing it and presenting it again for a new audience.

Once again no expense has been spared in staging the play. Lemuel Ayers, in this instance, has been entrusted with the settings and the costumes and he has executed a masterful job. Paul Bowles was commissioned to compose the incidental music. Melchor G. Ferrer staged the production, and Arthur S. Friend supervised the whole undertaking. Very wisely, those responsible were not content to let the play serve as a starring vehicle—an error which is all too easily fallen into with this and similar plays in which a central character does so largely dominate the action. The lovely Roxane is played by Frances Reid, who was last seen as the tragic Ophelia in the most recent revival of *Hamlet* with Maurice Evans. She seems in this instance to be far more effective and to have created a more vital character. One feels that she feels more deeply the emotions expressed in the lines and this, in effect, is the essence of an actor's art. Ernest Graves plays the prose-bound Christian De Neuvillette, who must resort to Cyrano's gift for poetry to prosecute his romance. Paula Laurence, one of our leading comedienettes, is not given the opportunity she deserves in the role of Roxane's duenna but it is heartening to see an actress of her stature enter into the spirit of ensemble playing so beautifully. Here, truly, is an expression of the fine spirit which is becoming ever more apparent in the attitude of the contemporary theatre workers. Hiram Sherman makes his first appearance since leaving the theatre to serve in the armed forces, is the chef Raguneau, and contributes a fine comedy bit. This "*Cyrano de Bergerac*" is a fine revival of an equally fine play.

## The Duchess of Malfi

THE success of the third revival is more difficult to estimate. Going back to the age of Shakespeare for the material, Paul Czinzer has presented his wife, Elisabeth Bergner, in a new adaptation by W. H. Auden of John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*. The play is one well known to students of the drama but rarely seen in the theatre. In a brief, but interesting, program note an anonymous commentator states:

"The tragedy of Blood and Revenge was a favorite type; it begins with Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* and includes *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. Apart from Shakespeare, who transformed the type into something else, *The Duchess of Malfi* is the greatest example we have. It combines the highlights of the Renaissance as seen by the Italianate Elizabethans with the darkest shadows of the Middle Ages as we find them in the contemporary sermons of John Donne."

"Blood and Revenge" is certainly the dominant note of the play. Ferdinand, Duke of Calabria and his brother, the Cardinale, are determined to keep rigid control of the realm. The only possible threat is their sister, Giovanna.





A brilliant moment in the equally brilliant revival of Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*. Left to right: Estelle Winwood and Penelope Dudley Ward, seated on the settee. John Buckmaster, Cornelia Otis Skinner and Rex Evans. Setting and costumes by Cecil Beaton.

and her family when she shall marry. No one of the triumvir trusts the other and an unyielding fate dogs all their footsteps. Giovanna secretly marries her steward, Antonio Bologna, and only her faithful waiting-woman is in their confidence. Through the machinations of a smooth courtier, however, the brothers come to know and from that moment set out upon their bloody course. The courtier, Daniel de Bosola, although he might like to turn back, is caught in the workings of the hideous plot. All must toil on to their eventual destruction. Auden, a great fancier of this period in literature, has returned all the spirit of the original. The play is a bit more swiftly paced than a reading of the original text would lead one to believe it might be, but at no time is one aware of incongruity or of too great a variance from the source.

In the staging, George Rylands, whose first job for the American theatre this is, has tried to further catch the quality of the period. This production, like *Lady Windermere's Fan*, is based upon the one done previously in London by John Gielgud and his company. We are certainly in the debt of these British theatre artists. Miss Berger has not, it is feared, the qualities which her role calls for. She does not seem to be able to forget the arch mannerisms which have so long been an important part of her technique. Her Giovanna is less a medieval princess than a rather terrified school-girl in fancy dress. Whitfield Connor is very effective as Antonio, and his moments are among the most pleasant in the play. The villains are played too strongly even for a play of this type by Donald Eccles as Ferdinand, John Carradine as the Cardinal and Canada Lee as De Bosola. Patricia Calvert looks lovely as the sympathetic Cariola, but spoke her lines so cloudily that almost all of her part was lost. *The Duchess of Malfi* in its present production should be seen by all students and lovers of the theatre, but its defects prevent one from receiving it with great enthusiasm.

#### Mr. Peebles and Mr. Hooker

**MR. Peebles and Mr. Hooker** come very close to being great theatre.

Into a Tennessee town, beset by labor troubles, the playwright, Edward E. Paramore, Jr., has brought two strangers. The first to arrive is a Mr. Hooker, who rents a shack by the railroad track, posts lurid pictures on the walls and keeps a roaring fire burning in his stove. The second is a Mr. Peebles, who resides with the local minister. It readily becomes apparent that the first is Satan, and the second God. Both have come to earth to ascertain whether the almost incredible stories that they hear about the place are true. God has decided that, if they are, he is going to flood the place once again; Satan merely wants to lure the sinners along the way to destruction.

The play is one that requires great delicacy in the telling and, except for an attempt at dramatizing one of Jesus' miracles in the final act, Mr. Paramore has met with success. He tries to prove that through love of one human for another the troubles of the world would be wiped away. The point had been beautifully apparent all along but, through hitting it too hard in the miracle sequence, the fine effect was entirely dissipated. It was a very short scene but so embarrassing a one that it was hard not to let it utterly destroy all that had gone before.

Howard Smith and Rhys Williams, in the title roles, both contributed fine performances. Paul Huber was fine as the old-school minister. Tom Coley and Dorothy Gilchrist played the young idealists whom Mr. Peebles sends out over the hills to start a fresh life just before he wipes out a section of Tennessee. James Robertson, a ballad singer, began the play most effectively—the main action being a putting into dramatic form the burden of his song. Martin Ritt directed the play; Frederick Fox designed the sets. *Mr. Peebles and Mr. Hooker* is a play I would like to see reworked and presented again in the near future.

#### For Contests

### WHO WILL REMEMBER

a one-act play for 6 women  
by Margaret Kennedy

The brilliant author of "Escape Me Never" (starring Elizabeth Bergner) and of "The Constant Nymph" sends this extraordinary one-act play from England. Seldom does one find a play for all women that projects so powerful a troubled atmosphere of romance and danger. It will win many contests. Price, 50c. Royalty \$10.00, \$5.00 when no admission is charged.

### THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING CO.

59 E. Van Buren St. Chicago 5, Ill.

#### Hear That Trumpet

**THE** same week saw another play open and close—Orin Jannings' *Hear That Trumpet*, a drama about a group of swing musicians. The leading roles, with the exception of Frank Conroy, were played by men who were primarily instrumentalists and not actors. Arthur Hopkin, whose productions always have merit, produced and directed. *Hear That Trumpet* is a queer play, and one that eludes completely satisfactory definition. It is almost a jam session interspersed with dialogue. It has about it the irregularity, the pronounced uneven tempo and the music it expressed.

#### Lysistrata

**IT** is almost fortunate that space does not allow for more than a brief word about the completely wrong production of Aristophane's great classic, *Lysistrata*. Rex Ingram and Etta Moten, in the leading roles, never even approached the magnificence of the lines they spoke in as flagrant an abuse of directorial power as has been seen.

#### More Revivals

**REVIVALS** seem to be among the most hopeful offerings in the weeks ahead. Theatre Inc. is offering John Millington Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* with Burgess Meredith in the title role; the American Repertory Theatre is initiating its career with a triple set of plays: *Henry VIII* of Shakespeare, J. M. Barrie's *What Every Woman Knows* and Ibsen's *John Gabriel Borkman*. A few of the new plays, however, look hopeful. Maxwell Anderson's *Joan of Lorraine* with Ingrid Bergman in the leading role is even now warming up on the road. Helen Hayes in Anita Loos' *Happy Birthday* is to open a very few days after this is written. Ina Claire is arriving in George Kelly's *The Fatal Weakness*, the first offering of the season by the Theatre Guild. If such talents as these do not infuse some artistry into the theatre, the truly American drama would be in a perilous state.

## THE FILM OF THE MONTH

By HAROLD TURNEY, *Chairman,*  
Department of Drama, Los Angeles City College,  
Los Angeles, California

This department is designed to direct attention to the outstanding motion pictures of the 1946-47 season. Suggestions for future discussions are welcomed by the Department Editor.

### Music in Films and the Story of Al Jolson

**M**USIC in motion pictures began as a matter of necessity. In the early days of silent films, music was largely employed to blot out noise from the projector. However, projection machines soon were enclosed suitably in sound-proof boxes, so this ceased to be a motive for music. But after a brief period without the benefit of musical accompaniment, it was discovered that music was essential to break the restless silence of early theaters.

Exhibitors realized that the screen needed a mood-builder. Legitimate theaters had pit orchestras to establish a mood prior to curtain time, but the movie houses could use music throughout their performances. Most theaters hired a piano player and a drummer and the drummer became the first sound effects expert in films. He would supply noises for gun shots, trains, galloping horses, etc. The pianist would arrive a few minutes before the picture was to start, hear a brief synopsis of the film's story from the theater manager, and then sit down and play whatever came to his mind in connection with what he saw on the screen.

During this same period, the "narrator" became part of the exhibition of early silent films. Usually, a high school or college student, the narrator would stand by the piano player and highlight the scenes for the audience. Typical of his chatter would be: "... and now Dangerous Dan reveals that he has evil designs on Little Lou. ... What can she do?"

Soon after narrators came illustrated slides inviting audiences to join in warbling popular numbers of the day. The singing would be led, usually by a girl, the cashier, who was hired upon two qualifications—her singing ability and her honesty.

Crude as these methods were, they inaugurated music in motion pictures.

Joining—or supplanting—the piano player and the drummer was the organist. He took an important role in the development of music in films. The organ added much prestige to theaters, and soon most of the important movie houses in the nation had added a highly-publicized organist.

It was the roadshow, however, which gave music and musicians their first great chance. With the release of *Birth of a Nation* and other big roadshow films in 1914, producers began sending out printed musical scores to be played with the exhibition of their pictures. These scores, known as "musical cue sheets," carried suggestions for the theater musicians.

Film studios engaged composers who made up these "cue sheets." In this case, the composers acted more as compilers, for cue sheets sug-

gested standard compositions which the theater would stock in a huge music library. The plan proved a great help to the large theaters, but the smaller houses, lacking the facilities of a music library of any scope, were forced to make none-too-successful substitutions.

Cue sheets, besides describing the action and suggesting the music, would also give the timing. For example, one might read: "Joan enters the parlor (twenty bars of *Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage*)". Or another: "Bill hops on horse (first two minutes of *Rose of Algiers*)".

It was through this system that theaters began to stock their music libraries. By 1917, music became so essential to the successful operation of a motion picture theater that many started using real pit orchestras consisting of from ten to twenty men.

Together with the exhibition of finer films, music was taking a more important place.

#### Early Picture Palaces

**B**Y the middle of 1919, a top-flight theater might have as many as ninety men in its pit orchestra. This was the start of the "picture palaces," such as New York's early Roxy and Capitol theaters. With this development, throughout the country, theaters began to engage top musical conductors to write, arrange and conduct scores for the more important films. Some of the well-known conductors, such as Erno Rapée, wrote original music for the films. While noted orchestras and conductors were signed to appear at the picture palaces, famous organists also made their debut in film houses. Jesse Crawford was among the first to play for the motion picture.

In 1920, world-famed Victor Herbert toured movie houses, conducting special prologues to films, with his own musical compositions.

An interesting phase of this "expanded orchestra pit" era was the sound effects table. An effects table was set up in the pit, near the drummer, who applied his art in many directions. He had thunder drums, chains, sirens, wooden blocks for hoof-beats, blank cartridges, and no end of odd gadgets to make the picture on the screen sound realistic.

With the days of the huge orchestra and noted conductor, a new phase of exhibition was born. This was the stage prologue. Special stage presentations, keyed to the moods of the feature films, were given in all large cities, with all top theaters trying to outdo each other. Most famed exponent of the prologue was Sid Grauman of Hollywood's famous Egyptian and Chinese theaters.

Engaged for these prologues were famous singing stars as well as other top names in the world of music. In 1925, in key U. S. cities,

any ticket-buyer could see a current movie, a great conductor and his orchestra and an elaborate stage presentation. This prompted theaters featuring vaudeville to add movies, in the form of newsreels and comedies, to hold their audiences. All such vaudeville houses eventually became motion picture theaters, and the film now moved ahead to become a serious threat to the legitimate theater.

#### The Voice That Thrilled the World

**T**HIS, then was the general picture of movies and music when sound films thundered in, upsetting all the customs and traditions of the industry. It was on the night of August 6, 1926, that Warner Bros. presented the first successful public exhibition of sound with John Barrymore in *Don Juan*, together with several short subjects in sound. *Don Juan*, with a special musical score written by Dr. William Axt and arranged by the late Major Edward Bowes, David Mendoza and Dr. Axt, was the first film to have a complete, self-contained musical score. The score, recorded on Vitaphone platters by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, was under the direction of Henry Hadley. The short subjects, which comprised the balance of the initial sound program, featured such world renowned artists as Mischa Elman, Marion Talley, Efrem Zimbalist, Anna Case, and Giovanni Martinelli.

Suddenly, music found itself in a peculiar spot. Heretofore concerned solely with the theaters and exhibition, it now was involved with the film producers.

In 1927, following the initial success of Vitaphone, audiences throughout the world heard the famous musical comedy minstrel star, Al Jolson, speak and sing for the first time in Warner Bros.' *The Jazz Singer*. Here Jolson sang "Blue Skies" and "Mammy" as astounded audiences the world around applauded. A year later, he appeared in another all-sound film, *The Singing Fool*, which featured the song "Climb Up On My Knee, Sonny Boy."

#### The Jolson Story

**A** PLAINTIVE figure in black-face, down on one knee, with white-gloved hands extended, singing "Mammy"... A cycle of songs—"The Spaniard Who Blighted My Life," "Carolina in the Morning," "California, Here I Come"... A richly-colorful career in the theater from chorus boy to star... The twentieth anniversary of the birth of sound films...

All of these, synonymous with the name of Al Jolson, gave the nationally-famous newspaper columnist, Sidney Skolsky, an idea for a motion picture. Immediately—and that was in 1942—he approached Jack Warner, production chief at Warner Bros.' studio. But he was promptly turned down with a gruff, "Jolson's-old stuff." Not undaunted, Skolsky presented his plan to the Columbia studios, where it was not only accepted but where he was employed to produce the feature film. Most original screen plays are given a slang tag, or working title, before the final selection of a release title. Skolsky's idea was tossed off as "the Jolson story." Today across the nation, it is still called *The Jolson Story*.

Three years of preparation followed. The Jolson career is a long one—about a half-century if you go back to his first appearance on the stage as a boy of twelve—and the vast amount of detail accumulated during these years required arduous editing before a continuous story with a steadily mounting line of dramatic interest could be evolved from it.



When the Research Department began the assignment, the workers soon discovered that, in spite of Jolson's fame, there was little in print on the personal side of his life. Apart from a few photographs and a voluminous commentary on his performances, nothing was available from which to spin a "behind-the-scenes" account of his life. But other researchers, across Hollywood at the Warner studios, had recently faced the same dearth of personal material in attempting to compose biographical-musical films based upon the lives of George Gershwin, *Rhapsody in Blue*, and of Cole Porter, *Night and Day*.

Taking his cue from the M-G-M studios, where the experts were building another similar film, *Till the Clouds Roll By*, a musical life-story of Jerome Kern, Skolsky spent six months with his live subject, Al Jolson, and wrote an outline "straight from the source." Later, in the fall of 1945, Jolson left his home in Miami, Florida, and took up temporary residence in Hollywood where he subjected himself and his biography to the explorations of the screen writers.

Meanwhile there was the matter of rights to music. Any story based on Jolson's life would be told largely in songs. The first blocking out of the story line indicated that nearly forty separate pieces of music would have to be cleared with the owners and publishers, orchestrated and blended into the considerable plot. After the filming rights had been negotiated, Morris Stoloff, the musical director, and his aides used sixteen months arranging the treatments and thus insuring that the orchestrations would follow the period of the play. The final arbiter of the music, of course, was Al Jolson himself, partly because he had been contracted to record the musical sound track while another player was to imitate him in front of the camera.

### Larry Parks As "Al Jolson"

IN the early stages of preparation, Jolson's interest focused most sharply on the selection of the actor to interpret his screen-life. Many players were tested and many offered proficiency in that great-American parlor stunt, "a perfect Jolson imitation." In fact, most of the candidates introduced themselves with the casual statement, "Oh, I can do a Jolson. That's easy!" Jolson said later that what endeared him to the young actor, Larry Parks, who finally got the part, was that Parks remained quiet on the subject in spite of his superior ability to imitate, and interpret, Jolson or any one of a wide range of other personalities. For a time, there was some difference of opinion as to whether Parks bore a twin-like physical resemblance to Jolson, but this was dispelled the moment he appeared before the "jury" in make-up. The duplication was heightened, Jolson commented many times during production of the film, as Parks acquired the Jolson mannerisms; especially his habit of cocking his head and looking askance at things, which tended to emphasize the white of his eyeballs.

After he had agreed to the role and for weeks before shooting began, Larry Parks dogged Al Jolson. They went to the fights together, to the races, and to many another sports event where Parks could observe Jolson relaxed amid the excitement of a crowd. Even when the stage-star tried to duck away for a brief rest at Palm Springs, California, Parks followed him to the desert. "Never," says Al Jolson, "have I been so shadowed." It was all part of the Parks' plan to make the role more than a flat portrayal—to achieve, if possible, a warm and human characterization. In catching the Jolson spirit he wanted the beat, the swing, the tempo, that make audience pulsebeats synchronize with Jolson's.

This first-hand study was supplemented with an extraordinary analysis of photographic tests, clips from newsreels and feature motion pictures, such as *The Jazz Singer* and *The Singing Fool*. In addition, Parks played at home and in his dressing room at the studio, every recording of Jolson he could find.



Larry Parks as Al Jolson and Evelyn Keyes as Ruby Keeler in *The Jolson Story*, a Columbia picture.

Thus, when Parks performed a scene, his own picture of Jolson was distinct, but there were other pictures to confuse him. First was the one held by Jolson himself, as he looked on. Jolson's own conception of how he looked and acted at the time of the incident being photographed was not necessarily the same as that of Parks'; in fact, it was often different. Nor was it always the correct one. In addition to Jolson's idea of the scene, there would be writer Stephen Longstreet's, director Al Green's and producer Sidney Skolsky's, to say nothing of other studio executives who had known Al Jolson personally for many years. All these varying conceptions of Jolson had to be reconciled when Parks did a scene, and the fact that he did so with a minimum of discussion is, we believe, a measure of his success in *The Jolson Story*.

### The Parks Story

BECOMING Al Jolson on the screen was far from the thoughts of Larry Parks when he was studying to be a doctor at the University of Illinois. He had had two serious childhood illnesses which had left him with a weakened heart, and with one leg slightly shorter than the other. His own will power and determination to emulate others, plus the encouragement of a hearty, non-coddling medical man, cured him. Today, he stands five feet, eleven inches, weighs 160 pounds and excels in many forms of sports—swimming and surf-board riding, tennis, skiing, and motorcycle racing.

While in college, Parks became interested in campus dramatics. When he received his Bachelor of Science degree, he decided to enter the acting, rather than the medical, profession. In New York, however, his closest contact with a theater was as an usher at Carnegie Hall, and later as a uniformed guide at Radio City. "This,

ladies and gentlemen," the dark-eyed, dark-haired guide would say often, "is the Music Hall, showplace of the nation."—never realizing that in the late fall of 1946 the screen would emblazon, "Larry Parks in *The Jolson Story*." He made friends, at this time, with another would-be actor who was also a guide. The friend's name was, and is, Gregory Peck.

Parks read THEATRE ARTS MONTHLY, answered sixty-four stock company ads, had six replies and accepted a position with the Guy Palmerston Players in Massachusetts because it offered a fabulous salary of twenty dollars a week. After the summer season in stock, he joined New York's Group Theater, where he played small parts in *My Heart's in the Highlands* and *The Pure in Heart*. Later, as a result of his father's death, he gave up acting for a more reliable income as a Pullman inspector on the New York Central Railroad. He hated every moment of it. So, when John Garfield, who had become interested in him at the Group Theater, wired saying that a part awaited him in Warner's *Mamma Raviola*, he hopefully hopped a bus to Hollywood. Thirty-six hours before the film was to start shooting, it was cancelled.

The despondent and out-of-funds young man served as stooge while Barry Fitzgerald was testing for the part later played by Edward Everett Horton in Columbia's *Here Comes Mr. Jordan*. Mr. Fitzgerald was found not to be the type; Mr. Parks was placed on the studio's contract list. His "B" picture career began with *Mystery Ship*, and after that, for thirty-odd pictures, it was the usual bleak miscellany of the film neophyte. With *The Jolson Story*, the letter "B" has been deleted from Larry Parks' career-alphabet. Soon he will be seen in another double-"A"—the Technicolor *Down to Earth*, in which he appears opposite Rita Hayworth.

## The Radio Program of the Month

By S. I. SCHARER, Radio Department

New York University, Washington Square, N. Y.

The purpose of this department is to direct attention to the outstanding radio programs on the air during the 1946-47 school year. Comments and suggestions from readers are welcomed by the Department Editor.

### The Theatre Guild on the Air

Sunday, 10:00 P. M. (E.S.T.), ABC

IT'S Sunday night and time for the "Theatre Guild on the Air." If you're one of the eight million or so listeners who have discovered this scintillating radio show, you stop what you're doing at home, settle back into your favorite easy chair and await the opening lines of the action with much the same eagerness and expectancy as when you attend the theatre. Having listened before you know that you can look forward to an hour of entertainment presented by top stars of radio, stage, and screen.

United States Steel is the sponsor of "Theatre Guild on the Air" and has adopted a policy toward commercials which many other sponsors could follow with good results. No singing commercials or repetitious advertising is used but, instead, George Hicks, of radio reportorial fame, delivers a factual, interesting account of some phase of U. S. Steel's activities. High praise has been accorded the weekly messages of this company. They were pronounced the "best for 1945" by the *Chicago Daily News* in its year-end review and 300 radio editors, voting in *Billboard's* fifteenth annual poll, judged them "in good taste, yet commercially effective."

What makes this program so successful? Many of the same factors that make for success in a stage production—a well written script, competent acting, effective direction, an appropriate musical score, and adequate sound effects.

United States Steel purchases this production from the Theatre Guild as a

"package." This means that for a set price a finished show is presented to the sponsor. The sponsor, in other words, has no headaches. Once the contract is signed the complete responsibility for the program is in the hands of the seller of the package. In this instance the Theatre Guild must choose the play to be dramatized, arrange for its adaptation, hire the cast and the director, pay the playwright for the use of his play, arrange for rehearsals and attend to the myriad of details necessary to put the show on the air.

Buying the time on the air, however, is still the sponsor's obligation. It's no secret that for the thirty-nine shows it produces for United States Steel from September to June, the Theatre Guild charges \$750,000. An equal sum is paid to the American Broadcasting Company for its coast to coast net work of 194 stations. This brings the total cost for each program to approximately \$38,500. It should be noted that this figure does not include promotion in newspapers and magazines.

CONSIDERABLE effort goes into the preparation of the broadcasts. This preparation commences as early as the summer before the regular broadcast season gets under way. (In radio the regular season is considered to be from about the second or third week in September to the first or second week in June. This period equals thirty-nine weeks. The remaining thirteen weeks between June and September are spoken of as the time of "summer replacements." During this time most of the regular shows are off the air.) A

play reading committee at United States Steel reads through a batch of plays sent to them by the Theatre Guild. This committee indicates the plays which meet with its approval. The next step is up to The Guild. They select the plays which they think suitable for broadcasting. The field is further narrowed when adaptations are submitted by script writers.

The script writers who do work for The Guild are generally very competent. They must adapt plays which in their original form run from two to two and a half hours to radio scripts which can be fitted into an hour's broadcasting time. More important and more difficult is the task of rewriting so that the appeal is to the ear instead of to the eye.

Obviously, radio does not have the advantage of sight as does the stage or the screen. It is up to the script writer to enable the listener to know just what is happening without benefit of scenery. The adaptor has the special task of reducing the play to its elements and then analyzing and re-assembling its separate parts. He has the additional problem of keeping the tone of the radio play consistent with the original and at the same time must so construct his dialogue as to convey the impression of real people.

The listener must never be left in doubt as to the scene of the action or the identity of the characters engaged in conversation. The writer must know how to employ music and sound to give the illusion of changes in time and place.

Many famous radio writers do the adaptations for the "Theatre Guild on the Air." Among them are: Eric Barnouw, Arthur Arent, Robert Cenedella, Kenyon Nicholson, Arthur Miller and Peter Lyon. Lyon specializes in music shows and to date has done the adaptations of *Knickerbocker Holiday* and *Sing Out Sweet Land*. Nicholson is particularly adept at comedy. One of his most successful adaptations was *Accent on Youth*. Cenedella does most of his work with historical plays. And Arent handles heavier drama, such as *Strange Interlude* and *Wings Over Europe*. Barnouw has shown his flair for adapting with his scripts on *Little Women*, *The Silver Cord* and *Prologue to Glory*.

Whenever possible, stars from the original Broadway casts have recreated their stage roles for the radio adaptations, as did Annabella, Louis Calhern and Oscar Karlweis in *Jacobowsky and the Colonel*. With one or two exceptions, all the players who participated in the radio presentation of *I Remember Mama* portrayed the same characters on Broadway. Similarly, and individually, *The Second Man* and *Ned McCobb's Daughter* had Alfred Lunt; *Strange Interlude* had Lynn Fontanne; *Knickerbocker Holiday* had Walter Houston and *Sing Out, Sweet Land!* had Burl Ives. In addition, the Lunts teamed in *The Gurdman* and *Elizabeth the Queen* and Shirley Booth and Sam Levene were featured in *Three Men on a Horse*.

Guest stars from Hollywood have included Academy Award Winners Katherine Hepburn, Joan Fontaine, Ray Milland and Frederic March. Among other top-flight performers of stage, screen and radio have been Burgess Meredith, Martha Scott, Arlene Francis, Leo G. Carroll, Betty Jane Watson, Paulette Goddard, Canada Lee, Boris Karloff, Stuart Erwin, Tallulah Bankhead, Walter Abel, Melvyn Douglas, Zachary Scott, Richard Conti, Pat O'Brien, Cedric Hardwicke and Walter Pidgeon.



United States Steel's radio show, "The Theatre Guild on the Air," is broadcast coast-to-coast over the ABC network every Sunday night from the stage of the Vanderbilt Theatre in New York. At microphone is the celebrated character actor, Walter Houston.





Playwright Kenyon Nicholson (left) and Director Homer Fickett shown in "blister" from which Fickett gives all on-stage cues during United States Steel's radio show, "The Theatre Guild on the Air." They are shown here during rehearsal of *Angel Street*, which Nicholson adapted for the airwaves.

THE director of "Theatre Guild on the Air" is Homer Fickett. His duties are very similar to those of a director of a stage play. The function of a director of a radio drama is first of all to understand the meaning and message of the play. He senses the mood of the script, in terms of the spoken word. Next he must cast the play. In casting he must be careful to choose actors whose voices create the desired picture in the listener's mind. A person who looks young, for example, will not necessarily have a voice which gives a picture of a young man. In short, in radio it is not how the actor *looks*, but rather how he *sounds* that is important.

Home Fickett is one of the pioneers of modern broadcasting techniques, with extensive experience in journalism and a keen understanding of the theatre. His record in radio includes the origination of the first successful daytime feature and the direction of such shows as *March of Time*, *The Cavalcade of America*, *The Inside Story* and *This is My Best*.

Mr. Fickett has written sketches for Broadway musicals. He gave a lecture, entitled *A Thousand And One Hours a Week*, at the Yale Drama School, marking the first time that radio received official recognition at that august institution. He introduced Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne, two of the Theatre Guild's most famous stars, in their first sponsored radio appearance, and has worked with Orson Welles, Agnes Moorehead, and many other stars.

During the first program this year Mr. Fickett was reminded of the fact that anything can happen in radio. Leo G. Carroll was recreating the role of Detective Ruff that he had played in the Broadway production of *Angel Street*. Suddenly, near the end of the program, Carroll dropped his script—dropped it in such a way that it fanned out all over the stage. The audience sat frozen in their seats and most of the members of the cast suffered the same discomfort. Victor Jory, who was also appearing in the production, took the situation in at a glance, got up from his seat on the stage and pointed out the place to the bewildered

and embarrassed Carroll. Jory acted so swiftly that it is doubtful if any of the radio audience even had an inkling of how close to catastrophe Carroll had come.

The music on "Theatre Guild on the Air" does much to enhance the production. The original musical scores are created by Hal Levey. Music in a radio drama must show changes in time or place or must create a mood for the action of the protagonists. Levey does his job with artistry. He is a top musician and conductor and is at home with anything from Bach to boggie-woogie.

ALL but four to six of the "Theatre Guild on the Air" programs originate in the Vanderbilt Theatre in New York, where special facilities for putting on the broadcast are provided. One of these, an innovation, is a soundproof glass enclosure which has been built in the middle of the orchestra pit where it projects slightly above the center of the stage without however, interfering with the audience's view of the actors.

Borrowing from aircraft terminology, the originators of this enclosure named it a "blister." It is really a prompter's box adapted to radio and it houses Mr. Fickett and a script timer. This blister is used by Mr. Fickett because the balcony control room high above the studio audience, is too far removed from the stage itself.

Its equipment includes a loudspeaker which transmits the voices of the actors from stage microphones and a microphone (called a "talkback") through which Mr. Fickett can transmit directions through a loudspeaker on the stage to the cast. Oral directions from the director to the

### Other Popular Dramatic Programs

*Cavalcade of America*, Monday, 8-8:30 P. M., NBC  
*Lux Radio Theatre*, Monday, 9-10 P. M., CBS  
*Columbia Workshop*, Saturday, 6:15-6:45 P. M., CBS  
*World's Great Novels*, Friday, 11:30-12 P. M., NBC

AN ALL-OCCASION PLAY

## DOUBLE DOOR

A Play in 3 Acts by Elizabeth McFadden

A hit in New York and London, toured in the principal cities of The United States and England, and in the films by Paramount. It now challenges the best acting of the tributary theatre.

The scene which stands throughout is a fascinating room in a palatial old house on Fifth Ave., New York. Here one generation opposes the next in a drama of powerful emotion. The characters are five men, seven women.

"This one deserves especial thanks and hearty praises. It returns us to expertness and fascination and fine mood in the theatre. I cannot hope to see any better production than this, all told this year."

—GILBERT GABRIEL, *American*.

"Elizabeth McFadden, the American author of 'Double Door,' knows the value of suggestion. That mysterious room meant melodrama . . . the audience sighed with anticipation . . . Besides its melodrama, which might have been written by Wilkie Collins, the author has painted the character of Victoria, with telling strokes. When the game is up and Victoria mumbles over the pearls, it was then that the audience rose at Sybil Thorndike with a storm of applause seldom heard after modern anaemic plays."

—*The Chronicle*, London.

Price 75 cents

Royalty: \$25.00

### SAMUEL FRENCH

25 West 45th Street  
 811 West 7th Street

New York  
 Los Angeles

actors, however, are limited to rehearsals. During actual broadcasts he must give all his instructions by sign language.

Fourteen to sixteen hours of rehearsal go into the production of "Theatre Guild on the Air." Rehearsals start on the Tuesday before the broadcast, and are not over until about a half hour before the show is due to go on the air. One of the reasons, perhaps, for the overall excellence of this program is the fact that the producers go to the trouble to cut a recording of the show a day or so before the broadcast, then play back the record, and benefit by their mistakes.

The history of the Theatre Guild is a typical American success story. It began in 1919 when Lawrence Langner and Theresa Helburn, administrative directors, and a small group of young theatre enthusiasts started off with very little financial capital.

"The first show folded" in a few weeks, but the second was a success, and from then on the Guild's rise was constant. Since that time it has produced about one hundred and fifty plays, forty of them smash hits, and has won about a third of the Pulitzer prizes awarded since the Guild went before the footlights. Its latest Broadway success is Eugene O'Neill's *The Ice Man Cometh*.

The Guild's extensive stage experience is one of the reasons why "Theatre Guild on the Air" is a program well worth your attention on Sunday nights. Join the ever growing audience of this fine dramatic production!

# The Play of the Month

Edited by EARL W. BLANK

Director of Dramatics, Berea College, Berea, Kentucky

This department is designed to assist directors, teachers and students choose, cast and produce plays of recognized merit. Suggestions concerning plays which readers should like to see discussed here will be welcomed by the Department Editor.

## Staging Julius Caesar

By DANIEL TURNER

Aldrich High School, Lakewood, R. I.

*Julius Caesar*, a tragedy in 8 scenes, by William Shakespeare, arranged by Thomas P. Robinson. 40 men; 2 women; extras as desired. No royalty. The Viking Press, 18 East 48th Street, New York City.

### Suitability

THIS play is surprisingly well adapted for presentation by high school pupils. The timelessness of its theme makes it meaningful to present-day audiences. The entire piece moves with almost lightning speed. There is a wide range of variety in dramatic conflict; yet it has a remarkable unity of plot structure and treatment. Besides, Shakespeare's matchless verse is certainly the finest medium by which to teach diction and dramatic interpretation.

### Plot

The plot of *Julius Caesar* is too well known to need reviewing. However, our readers may be interested to know about the edition which we used. Mr. Robinson has cut the original text so that its playing time is definitely under two hours. Therefore, I grasped the opportunity to make 10 very brief "inserts" from the original text, thus saving some of my "pet" lines from discard. Here is a synopsis of the scenes as we played them, with their average playing time (at 2 rehearsals and four performances).

Robinson Text	Our Label	Traditional Text	Time
Act I Scene 1	Opening	I 1 & 2	15
I 2	Garden	II 1	11
II 1	Dream	II 2	5
II 2	Murder	III 1	11
II 3	Funeral	III 2	13
III 1	Quarrel	IV 2 & 3	12
III 2	Parting	V 1	4
III 3	Final	V 3 & 5	8

Total intervals (including 10 min. intermission after Funeral)..... 1:23  
TOTAL TIME ..... 2:00

### Casting

The casting of this play should present no serious difficulties. Unlike most of Shakespeare's plays, nearly every part can be played as a "straight." Brutus should be earnest and extremely sincere; Cassius, sly and subtle. Of course, the Second Commoner should be a natural "clown." Beyond this the interpretation of a given role may be adapted somewhat to the personality

## Daniel Turner

Mr. Turner holds the A. B. and M. A. degrees from Bates College, Lewiston, Maine. He has also studied at Brown and Columbia Universities. He has sponsored a Thespian troupe in Millinocket, Maine, and he is now sponsor of Troupe 672 at the Aldrich High School.—DEPARTMENT EDITOR.

of the individual player assigned to it. For instance, one might think of Julius Caesar as a pompous, over-bearing tyrant. The boy we selected for the part was certainly not that. He became a very effective Caesar—serious-minded and likeable—who merely "talked" to his subjects. Mark Anthony and oratory have almost become traditional synonyms. But our Anthony was not a ranter of tirades. This "dark-horse" candidate—a lithe, shy youth, who had never appeared in a play—was the unanimous choice of the casting committee, because he read in a calm, restrained voice that fascinated the listener. At the final performances there was

never the slightest movement in the audience during the funeral scene; the hearers seemed almost too spell-bound to breathe.

Perhaps we should note here the distribution of the lines among the cast. Only the top four roles could in any sense be called "major." Our prompt copies show the following statistics (the count being in terms of blank-verse lines not speeches) Brutus, 568; Cassius, 370; Anthony, 230; Julius Caesar, 131. Casca is next with a mere 53. Of the 40 speaking parts for boys, 21 have fewer than 10 lines each. Some directors may consider this unequal distribution as a disadvantage, but many might welcome the opportunity to use a large number of boys in minor roles, thus giving so many more the chance to "get on and off" in acceptable manner. It certainly is a capital opportunity to teach cooperation and precision in acting to a large group. Even the boy with only "Good morrow, Caesar" to say was made to realize the importance of his performing at the right time and place. Some directors may consider the "40 m. 2 f." cast undesirable especially in the typical high school where the female candidates for acting parts will probably outnumber the male by at least three to one. It is my contention that selecting plays with more male parts is an effective method of combatting the seeming lack of histrionic ambition on the part of high school boys. Be that as it may, in any classic costume play, particularly in Shakespeare, girls can be used effectively in male roles along with boys. Or one may find that an all-girl cast might produce a play like *Julius Caesar* very well.

### Stage Problems

No director need ever fear the problem of scenery in doing Shakespeare. Such plays are so beautiful in themselves—so classic—that they need no background. However, they are usually enhanced by artistic settings, which should be as elaborate as the equipment and budget of the organization will allow. Mr. Robinson's production notes on staging are flexible enough to be adapted to almost any situation. We did the eight scenes somewhat as follows:

I. *Street in Rome*. Sky drop. Two flats painted a neutral brown and placed on side formed a wall with break at center. Platforms, two steps high behind the wall and at center stage. Pedestals on either side of center platform bore busts of Caesar and Pompey. Both going to and returning from the games, Caesar and his procession crossed on the platforms behind the wall, the procession halting so that Caesar spoke from the center between the two pedestals.

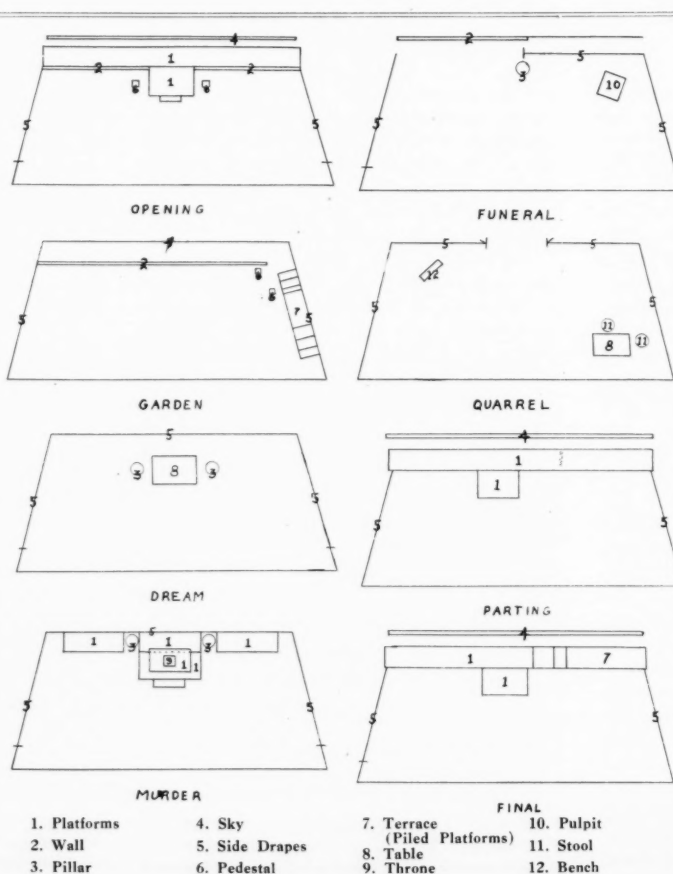
II. *Brutus' Garden*. Sky drop. Solid wall. Gate at up left corner. Three platforms atop each other formed a terrace on which Portia appeared. Steps at upper end brought her to stage level.

III. *Caesar's House*. Drapes all around. Table at center back with statuary and candlestick. Large pillars on either side of table.

IV. *Senate Chamber*. Drapes all around. Pillars same position. Table replaced by platforms and throne. Platforms for Senators at left and right rear.

V. *Forum*. Drapes at left half at back; sky drop and wall at right half. The left pillar remained at edge of drapes. Pulpit up left.

VI. *Brutus' Tent*. Drapes all





around, but pinned back at center, back to represent tent flaps. Sky backing. Table, two stools, bench.

VII. *Plains of Philippi*. Sky drop. Platforms across rear and at center as in Opening Scene.

VIII. *Battlefield at Philippi*. Same, except that left half at back was built up with platforms to form the hill.

## Directing

This production is easily the highlight in my many years of directing. Never before have I learned so much about dramatic technique. In this production there was infinite opportunity to teach precise timing and to show its importance. The entire play is very tense dialogue and affords wonderful studies in action and reaction, picking up cues, and building to climax. I am convinced that this play gains its best effect by being played at a very rapid tempo. It should give the audience the feeling of being drawn relentlessly toward inevitable catastrophe. At the very beginning I set up the irrevocable law: Someone must be talking all the time. It brought the desired effect. I do not know what scenes or situations other directors might find difficult. Perhaps the Funeral Scene might be one, inasmuch as it has little stage action and no dialogue in the ordinary sense of the word. We were fortunate in having an Anthony who was definitely magnetic, so this scene turned out to be the tensest one of the eight. But it could be a complete "flop" with an inadequate Anthony and an unresponsive mob. The mob here, as in the other scenes, can be tremendously effective. The Quarrel Scene following the Funeral, was the most difficult for us to manage. There is quite a break in continuity of plot between the two scenes. Then the Quarrel starts off with so much dramatic fire that it is difficult to maintain this high pitch through the reconciliation, the decision to march to Philippi, Brutus' reading the book, thus leading up to the appearance of Caesar's ghost. I think we solved this by continuing through the entire scene at a quickened pace set at the beginning, and further by an attempt to interpret the psychological significance of the situation. For instance, until ten days before production, I felt that the Quarrel Scene was failing miserably. Brutus and Cassius "wrangled" magnificently, but that was all. So the three of us went after the problem. We tried to justify the quick reconciliation by showing that both Brutus and Cassius realized that their mutual love and respect was greater than any possible quarrel, and that any such quarrel was trivial in the light of their joint concern and shared apprehension concerning the morrow. This approach made it possible to sustain the dramatic tension to the end of the scene. When the boys realized that they were responsible for doing something more than bat angry words about, then the scene clicked.

## Rehearsals

The rehearsal problem was simple after

all. The first step was one individual rehearsal for each member of the cast, whereat he read all his lines and was shown all his entrances, exits, major movements and positions. This was not such a formidable task for the many "bit" parts were disposed of in five minutes each. Then followed daily half-hour rehearsals, both before and after school—one scene at each rehearsal. (We always cut the Brutus and Cassius dialogues because these two boys rehearsed with me two or three evenings a week by arrangement.) On one or two occasions I began the rehearsal with only one character—several times with only two. Never did we have a "full cast" even for a single scene, until the day of the matinee. Prompters soon became adept at giving widely scattered cues. So I believe that the absences from rehearsals were often a blessing in disguise. The entire cast became tremendously "cue conscious," and the small groups made it possible to give individual instruction without wasting the time of many people. At the half-hour rehearsals we never failed to go through the scheduled scene twice and often we did it four or five times.

## Lighting

There is plenty of opportunity here for a stage electrician to put his ingenuity to work. We did little more than to set the lights for daylight in the *Opening*, *Murder*, *Funeral*, and *Parting Scenes*; and for night in the *Garden Scene*. In the *Dream Scene* we started the lights low, brought them gradually amid lightning flashes. The reverse procedure was used in the *Quarrel* and *Final Scenes*. I wanted to use a red floodlight on the sky in the *Final Scene* (where Cassius "perceives the fire") but had to forego it since we could not attach the floodlights to a dimmer.

## Music

The Overture to Wagner's *Rienzi* (recorded), made a beautiful musical background for the opening and closing of the curtain and also between scenes. We used it also during the scenes to accompany the entrance of Caesar and his procession, also at the moment of the stabbing. The concluding strain was used to bring in Anthony's army in the last two scenes.

## Costuming

Our Home Economics Department made all our costumes from unbleached cotton—about 170 in all. Every person wore a tunic as a basic garment. All were knee-length (except for the two girls) and exactly alike in pattern. All colored garments were dyed in the Home Economics Department. The Art Department stenciled the borders on the togas.

The complete simplicity and uniformity of design in our costumes, accessories, and stage sets gave our production a stylized effect.

## COSTUME PLOT

### Opening

Flavius: Tunic—white; long cloak—red.  
Marullus: Tunic—white; long cloak—green.  
1st Comm.: Tunic—white.  
2nd Comm.: Tunic—white.  
20 Commoners: Tunics—4 green, 4 brown, 4 blue, 4 red, 4 yellow.  
Caesar: Tunic—purple; toga—purple, with gold; mantle—purple, with gold.  
Anthony: Tunic—orange.  
Brutus: Tunic—white; toga—white, blue border; mantle—blue, with gold.  
Cassius: Tunic—white; toga—white, green border; mantle—green, with yellow.  
Caska: Tunic—yellow; toga—white.  
Decius: Tunic—orange; toga—white.  
Trebonius: Tunic—brown; toga—white.  
Metellus: Tunic—green; toga—white.  
Cinna: Tunic—blue; toga—white.  
Ligarius: Tunic—white; toga—white.  
10 Senators: Tunics—white; togas—white, with red borders.  
10 Patricians: Tunics—2 green, 2 blue, 2 red, 2 brown, 2 orange; short cloaks—2 orange, 2 red, 2 white, 2 green, 2 black.  
10 Commoners: Tunics—2 white, 4 blue, 4 orange.  
4 Musicians: Tunics—white; short cloaks—blue.  
6 Lictors: Tunics—white; short cloaks—red.  
6 Guards: Tunics—white; 6 armor.  
Soothsayer: Tunic—white; long cloak—blue.

### Garden Scene

Brutus: Tunic—same; Cassius—same.  
5 Conspirators: 5 tunics, same; 5 long cloaks with hoods, black.  
Lucius: Tunic—white.  
Portia: Long tunic; cloak—gold.

### Dream Scene

Caesar: same; Publius (senator): same; Conspirators: Tunics—same; togas—white; Calpurnia: Long tunic—red; cloak—gold.

Servants (2): Tunics—white.

### Murder Scene

Same: Caesar, Anthony, Soothsayer, 8 conspirators, 10 senators, 10 patricians, 30 commoners, 4 musicians, 6 lictors, 6 guards.  
Servant: Tunic—white.

### Funeral Scene

Same: Brutus, 30 commoners, 10 patricians, 8 guards.  
Anthony: Tunic—black; toga—black.

### Quarrel Scene

(N.B.—Armor added to all costumes except to those of servants.)  
Same: Brutus, Cassius, Lucius.  
Lucilius: Tunic—white; military cloak—green.  
Pindarus: Tunic—blue.  
Titinius: Tunic—white; military cloak—orange.  
Messala: Tunic—white; military cloak—blue.  
Varro and Claudius: Tunics—green.  
Caesar's Ghost: Same, with gauze.  
10 soldiers: Tunics—white; armor.

### Parting Scene

Same: All as in preceding scene, also:  
Anthony: Tunic—white; mantle—scarlet.  
Octavius: Tunic—white; mantle—purple.  
4 Standard Bearer: Tunics—white; short cloaks—2 green, 2 red.  
Messenger: Tunic—white.  
20 Soldiers: Tunics—white.

### Final Scene

Same: All as in preceding scene, also:  
Volumnius: Tunic—white; military cloak—blue.  
Cato: Tunic—white; military cloak—blue.  
Dardanius: Tunic—white.  
Clitus: Tunic—orange.  
Strato: Tunic—green.

## Make-up

Our stylization keynote of uniformity ran into the make-up department too. We gave straight make-up to everyone—perhaps just a "worry" line or two on some school-boy complexions, but that's all. Though the elderly Publius appeared in two scenes and spoke three words, we did not even attempt "to do his age some mischief."

## Budget

### Receipts:

Patrons' Passes .....	\$140.00
Sale of Program Booklets....	31.00
Box Office.....	184.00
	<hr/>
	\$355.00

### Expenses:

Cloth, etc.—Costumes.....	\$ 89.64
Printing .....	13.09
Shop Dept.—Lumber, etc.....	60.22
Art Dept.....	25.50
Miscellaneous .....	20.46
	<hr/>
	208.91

Net .....\$146.01

## Publicity

I have always been notoriously unconcerned about the box-office, and even with  
(Continued on page 23)

# Drama for Children

By LOUISE C. HORTON

Drama Department, The College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, Minn.

This Department has for its purpose the advancement of the Children's Theatre Movement in America. Directors and teachers are urged to report to Miss Horton, for publication in this Department, news of their productions and other significant projects.

## You, the High School Thespian, Look at Children's Theatre

AND what do you see? A group of your junior high brothers and sisters agonizing through an "original" play by one of their classmates? Varying aged boys and girls dragging through a recital, an endless parade of emoting, dancing, singing or playing? A class of kindergartners romping through a dull exhibition of "creative" dramatics that would make Winifred Ward's hair stand on end?

Or do you see a stage picture of blended color, line, light and movement that thrills? A stage that, coming to life under a secret magic touch, gives you the delicacy of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* . . . the tingling thrill of *Robin Hood* . . . the mystic wonder of *Joan of Arc* . . . the sparkling laughter of *Seventeen*? For all these can be and are children's theatre.

The term, Children's Theatre, is an unfortunate description of one of the leading movements in contemporary theatre. Yet there doesn't seem to be an adequate substitute. We have thought and thought and have not been able to find one that fits, that describes the movement in all its implications.

We need children's theatres that are alive and young. Who is more fitted to answer that need than youth itself? Many of you high school people who run active, rising dramatic groups really have a duty toward the younger fry.

Why not give them a break? Include in your year's program a play or two calculated to attract—and hold—the grade schoolers? And that is not an easy job.

Name your Children's Theatre attractively—beckoningly. For example, there are the Jack and Jill Players in Chicago, the Curtain Pullers in Cleveland.

After you have beckoned and the children and young people come to your theatre, what will you give them?

A children's play need not necessarily be chosen for a children's audience. That is facetious-sounding until you think of our children today as movie, radio and comic-strip-educated, which they certainly are, and you will see the sober truth of it.

As an actual, alive high school dramatic club, you should be able to create just the theatre that children will love. Be choosy in the plays that you present for the very young set.

WHEN we adults organize a children's theatre, we inevitably decide that what the children want and need is *Cinderella*, *Aladdin*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Sleeping Beauty*, etc., etc., on through Grimm and Anderson and the Arabian Nights. If we vary at all, we give them *The Five Little Peppers*, *Little Black Sambo*, *Little Women*, *Tom Sawyer*, or the like.

This is no implication that there is anything wrong with these grand old titles. They are tried and true and belong on the children's stage. But after you high school boys have given the youngsters a red-blooded performance of *Treasure Island*, next give them a play that they will feel is "grown-up". Give them *The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife* (Anatole France) *The Taming of the Shrew*, or a bit of Molière. Your audience may have to reach a little but that is good for them. And you can be sure that as they are reaching, they will love it, and so will you.

Naturally, cuttings must be made in these plays and a definite adaptation for your youthful audience. This your director will know how to handle. The adult content, however, need not be entirely killed. That adult flavor is part of what the children love.

You have chosen your plays. How will you present them?

Often a youngster is heard to remark, "I'd rather go to a movie than to children's theatre. Movies are better."

The unpleasant fact is that the movies are better; better acted, directed, costumed, and in better settings. The only way that a children's theatre of moderate means can possibly combat this is not to try for expensive stage effects, but to present performances so sincerely and strikingly acted and directed that the decorations of the play cease to be of such exaggerated importance.

A children's audience is the hardest in the world to play to. If the play is not beautifully, truthfully, and excitingly presented, they just will not stay. And they will not come again.

The reaction of a children's audience can be an excellent barometer for your artistic abilities. Your parents and friends will be tolerant, and excuse you fondly. The children will not. They want entertainment, thrills and beauty, and unless you give it to them, you can close your theatre doors.

Why not consider children's theatre? For your own artistic development, and for the benefit of the youngsters themselves, add a play or two for the children's audiences!

In the next appearance of this column, I shall tell you about some of the Children's Theatres throughout the country that are run by high schools, and some by colleges. If you have such a theatre, let me know about it.

## St. Paul, Minn.

ON Saturday, November 2, the Drama Clinic for the Catholic Secondary Schools of St. Paul, Minnesota, was sponsored jointly by The College of St. Catherine and The College of St. Thomas. Mable Frey and John Doll, heads of the two drama departments, planned the day's program, the morning at St. Catherine's, the afternoon at St. Thomas'.

As part of its contribution to the Dramatic Clinic, The College of St. Catherine introduced to the high schools the idea of children's theatre.

The idea was presented dramatically so that the high schools could see its possibilities.

The College's gay Little Theatre is semi-circular, just repainted in two shades of light blue, with here and there a bright splash of friendly red. Four steps running the full length of the 27 feet proscenium opening lead up gracefully to the intimate stage with its soft blue curtain.

In this setting and for the audience of high school students and their instructors, a cast of college freshmen presented Edna St. Vincent Millay's lovely and delicate *The Princess Marries the Page*.

There was a definite reason both for the choice of play and of players. The play was chosen carefully to point out several things: that a play, to appeal to children, need not be (nay, had better not be) a childish one; that a production aimed at a child audience has need for just as skillful directing and acting as has an adult play; that the play chosen have a blend of artistic value and theatrical excitement; that a play for children need not have children in the cast; and that a child audience is the hardest in the world to play to.

The play was cast from the freshmen because they are the closest in age to the high school students.

## Pontiac, Mich.

DIRECTLY in this line of thought comes news of a brand-new Children's Theatre stemming from the speech department of a high



Students on the stage of the 'Himble Theatre in the Children's Playhouse at Muncie, Indiana. Directed by Irene Belcher. See description on next page.



## Calendar of Events

Children's Theatre of Syracuse University  
June 14-15, 1946. *Seven Keys to Baldpate*

Children's Theatre of Cheyenne, Wyoming  
June 28, 1946—An Interlude and  
3 One-act Plays:

*Nevertheless*  
*Darby and Joan*  
*Almost Seventeen*  
*Silver Slippers*

July 12, 1946. . . . . *Snow White*  
July 19, 1946. . . . . *The Land of the Dragon*

Detroit Civic Players

Oct. 5, 1946. . . . . *Heidi*  
Dec. 19, 1946. . . . . *The Blue Bird*  
Mar. 1, 1947. . . . . *The Little Princess*  
April 15, 1947. . . . . *Princess Dayshine*  
May 14, 1947. . . . . *Racketty-Packetty House*

Wayne University, Detroit

Tour in February, 1947. . . . . *King Midas*

College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, Minn.

Nov. 2, 1946. *The Princess Marries the Page*  
After Lent. Possibly *The Emperor's New Clothes*

University of Minnesota

Feb. 1947. . . . . *Rip Van Winkle*  
April, 1947. . . . . *Mr. Dooley, Jr.*

Children's Playhouse, Muncie, Indiana

Nov. 29-30, 1946. . . . . *Sleeping Beauty*  
Feb. 14-15, 1947. . . . . *Heidi*  
March, 1947. . . . . *The Tatterman Marionettes*  
April 25-26, 1947. . . . . *Rumpelstiltskin*

Johns Hopkins Children's Educational Theatre

Nov. 2-3, 1946. . . . . *Riquet with the Tuft*  
(French fairy tale)  
Jan., 1947. . . . . *The Happy Prince* (Wilde)  
March, 1947. . . . . *Alice in Wonderland*  
May, 1947. . . . . *The Prince and the Pauper*

Goodman Memorial Theatre, Chicago

Oct.-Nov., 1946. . . . . *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*  
Dec., 1946. . . . . *Red Riding Hood*  
Possibilities. . . . . *The Prince and the Pauper*  
Many Moons

Jack and Jill Players, Chicago

July 19, 1946. . . . . *January Thaw*

school. It is in Pontiac, Michigan, under the direction of W. N. Viola, director of dramatics and chairman of the speech department in the high school. This new theatre opened its first year with four performances, on October 18-19, of *Snow White* and *the Seven Dwarfs*. The two Friday performances were added because of the great demand for tickets. That looks well for the Pontiac venture.

### Detroit, Mich.

NEWS of another new Children's Theatre comes from Michigan also. Organized as a branch of the already established Detroit Civic Players, a children's group is becoming active. There is little specific information forthcoming, but they do plan five plays for children this year, with a special Christmas event, a production of Maeterlinck's *The Blue Bird*. Their entire year's program is listed in the calendar of events.

### Muncie, Ind.

FOR individuality and that "something different," we give the palm this month to Irene Belcher's Children's Playhouse in Muncie, Indiana.

Besides the Playhouse itself, which produces the regular year's program of full-length plays, Mrs. Belcher has now introduced what she calls a Thimble Theatre. This is just what its name implies, "children's drama in miniature." On its tiny stage, the children have a chance to present creative drama. The intimate contact with their audience calls for much poise and

stage presence on the part of the youngsters.

In Mr. Belcher's own words: "The blue velvet front curtains open with tableau rigging, to reveal a black cyc against which group pictures stand out in effective, clear-cut scenes. The cyc is hung in sections at the back which lends itself to forest scenes of 'trees' or to those with various entrances.

"The stage is small, but its black cyc and effective lighting through its own little switchboard, has produced very fine stage pictures. . . . It is informal drama, with children working more for the development of personality through creative dramatics, than for the finished production."

The measurements given by Mrs. Belcher are:

Stage floor. . . . . 22' high (from floor of auditorium)  
Playing area of stage. . . . . 21' x 12'  
Proscenium height. . . . . 14'  
" opening. . . . . 21' wide, 9' high  
Back cyc. . . . . 12' high

## Children's Theatre in Colleges and Universities

FOR some time Children's Theatre has also been eager to expand into the drama departments of prominent universities and colleges. If we can enter into those theatres which, throughout the country, are making the firmest strides forward, we will be doing much toward the future productiveness of Children's Theatre.

This should eventually circle back in actuality to our main topic of Children's Theatre and the high school. A university or college Children's Theatre will turn out young high school drama instructors soundly prepared for both high school and Children's Theatre.

There is suddenly great encouragement. As one result of the Seattle Conference last August, we have an inspiring list of colleges and universities which, in one way or another, have introduced Children's Theatre into the active life of their drama departments.

Here they are: Northwestern University; Johns Hopkins University; Wayne University, Detroit; University of Michigan; University of Minnesota; University of Denver; Syracuse University; Stanford University; University of Washington; University of Iowa; Western Reserve University; University of Akron; University at Fort Wayne, Indiana; University of Utah; Drake University at Des Moines, Iowa; University of Texas; Baylor University at Waco, Texas; The College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minn.; Western College at Oxford, Ohio; Texas State College for Women; Mills College; Westhampton College of University of Richmond; Brooklyn College; Central College of Education; College of Puget Sound; Maryhurst College, Oregon; Monticello College, Godfrey, Illinois; College of St. Francis, Joliet, Ill.; Mount St. Joseph Teachers' College, Buffalo, N. Y.

If you have Children's Theatre in your university or college drama department, and are not in our list—let us hear from you!

### More Children's Plays

SEÑOR ERNESTO MONTENEGRO, Chilean journalist and author, recently made a statement that should interest both established and would-be Children's Theatre playwrights. He spoke of the American's great curiosity to learn all the intimate details of life in the various Latin American countries. What do they eat? What do they wear? What games do they play? What do they love? Hate? Believe in?

And for the playwright: how can this curiosity be fostered into a real understanding of our Latin American neighbor?

This is certainly children's theatre territory. How can this important gap be bridged more graphically than in the magic terms of theatre?

However, we cannot do it without the playwright. We can only turn to him and hope

## Notice

A NATIONAL directory of Children's Theatres is being prepared by the Children's Theatre Committee of the American Educational Theatre Association. If you direct or are associated with a Children's Theatre, you are requested to report the name of your theatre, address, name of director, and address of director to Louise C. Horton, Drama Department, The College of St. Catherine, St. Paul 1, Minn.

that, instead of still another dramatization of *Sleeping Beauty*, he will give us a stirring, exciting Latin American story.

The need for good children's plays is becoming more and more apparent to more and more people. It is popping up in unexpected places. In Laurena Pringle's everyday column in *The Detroit Free Press*, on October 2, it is given the leading position with the headline: "Lack of Children's Plays Decried."

Maybe we will get what we want, after all—if we "holler" loudly enough.

### Publishers

THAT the play publishers are beginning to sit up and take notice—and act—in this matter is encouraging. Dramatic Publishing Company will publish seven plays from the manuscript library of the Association of Junior Leagues. They are: *Alice in Wonderland*, by Charlotte Choppenning; *Hansel and Gretel*, by Catherine Ellis Wilkinson; *The Little Red Hen*, by Everett Glass; *Pinocchio*, by Dorothy Dayton Stone; *The Princess and the Swineherd*, by Madge Miller; *Rumpelstiltskin*, by Charles and Kacy Suggs, and *The Tinder Box*, by Richard McKelvey.

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1947

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OF

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and LITTLE THEATRES

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## Two Famous Reference Books of the Theatre

THE STAGE IS SET by Lee Simonson

A descriptive and critical history of theatrical production from the early theatre to the present day in the terms of scenic design. Written by one of the most distinguished pioneers in scene designing and theatre production, a founder and for many years years director of The Theatre Guild. Contains notable chapters on the poetic drama, the function of scenery in the theatre of ideas, the Greek and medieval theatres, the theatre of Moliere, the Shakespearean stage, the beginning of stage realism during the Renaissance, the innovations of the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, the ideals of Gordon Craig, and the contributions of Adolphe Appia to scenic design and lighting in theatre and opera.

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### MASTERS OF THE DRAMA by John Gassner

The famous, comprehensive, historical and critical study of the drama from primitive times to our own day, in all nations. This encyclopedic work provides a detailed account of the work of all the major dramatists, summarizes and analyzes their important plays, and relates their work to their lives, and their lives to the social and intellectual history of their times. It is the only history of the theatre revised to cover the 1940-45 war period. The book also takes note of the relations of music to drama, operetta, dance, etc. Among dramatists whose work is fully covered are Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Moliere, Racine, Goethe, Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, Hauptmann, Pirandello, Shaw, and O'Neill.

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## Spanish Fork and Lakewood Thespians Winners in Handbill Contest

Massillon and Columbus Troupes in Second Place

THE 1945-46 honors for the best handbills entered in the annual competition sponsored by The National Thespian Society were won by members of Troupe 25 of the Spanish Fork, Utah, High School, with a printed program for a production of the three-act comedy, *Janie*, and by members of Troupe 672 of the Nelson W. Aldrich High School, Lakewood, Rhode Island, with a mimeographed handbill for a production of *Julius Caesar*. In addition to the usual information concerning the cast and production staff, the winning handbills contain a wealth of other data regarding the production and drama department. The Spanish Fork play was directed by Jayne E. Tanner, while the production of *Julius Caesar* was under the direction of Daniel Turner. Each of these Troupes was awarded a cash price of \$5.00.

Second place honors were captured by Thespians of Troupe 332 of the Upper Arlington High School, Columbus, Ohio, with their handbill for a production of *The Night of January 16th*, directed by Frank H. Jakes, and by members of the Struts and Frets Club (Thespian Troupe 178) of the Washington High School, Massillon, Ohio, with their publication devoted to dramatic activities for the season, with Herbert E. Rogers as director. A prize of \$3.00 has been awarded to each of these schools.

Honorable mention was awarded to the following entries, out of an all-time record of 212 mimeographed and 482 printed programs entered in competition:

### (Printed Handbills)

*Lost Horizon*, Troupe 53, Washington Gardner High School, Albion, Mich. Directed by Leitha V. Perkins.

*George and Margaret*, Troupe 628, North Central High School, Spokane, Wash. Directed by Grace Gorton.

*You Can't Take It With You and Best Foot Forward*, Troupe 493, Kiser High School, Dayton, Ohio. Directed by Robert W. Ensley.

*Lost Horizon*, Troupe 44, Henryetta, Okla., High School. Directed by Derwood A. Clay.

*The Fighting Littles*, Troupe 59, Danville, Ill., High School. Mary A. Miller, director.

*Night Must Fall*, Troupe 178, Washington High School, Massillon, Ohio. Directed by Herbert E. Rogers.

*Kind Lady*, Troupe 468, The Franklin School, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Directed by Martha Anna Clinton.

*Tomorrow the World*, Troupe 174, Iron Mountain, Mich., High School. Directed by William T. Wilkoff.

*Garden of the Moon*, Troupe 660, Johnstown, Pa., Central High School. Directed by Edith Paul.

*Strictly Formal*, Troupe 240, Lubbock, Texas, High School. Directed by D. M. Howell.

*Family Tree*, Troupe 643, A. L. Miller High School, Macon, Ga. Directed by Mary Alfriend.

### (Mimeographed Programs)

*A Little Honey*, Troupe 529, Carlisle, Ky., High School. Directed by Mrs. Edna Dryden.

*The Man Who Came to Dinner*, Troupe 282, John Greer High School, Hoopeston, Ill. Directed by B. F. Johnston.

Program of Four One-act Plays, Troupe 195, Fort Benton, Mont., High School. Mildred L. Glover, director.

*Suspense*, Troupe 62, Oakwood Twp. High School, Muncie, Ill. Directed by Genevieve Richardson.

*Mrs. Moonlight*, Troupe 282, John Greer High School, Hoopeston, Ill. Directed by B. F. Johnston.

Memorial Service Program, Troupe 187, Brownsville, Pa., Senior High School. Directed by Jean E. Donahay.

*The Trail of the Lonesome Pine and The Imaginary Invalid*, Troupe 641, Lakefield, Minn., High School. Directed by Mrs. James E. Larsen.

*Love Your Neighbor*, Troupe 89, Struthers, Ohio, Junior-Senior High School. Directed by Arleigh Westerbeck.

"4 at 8" Program of One-act Plays, Troupe 493, Kiser High School, Dayton, Ohio. Directed by Robert W. Ensley.

All handbills entered in the 1945-46 annual competition were deposited this fall with the Theatre Collection of the New York City Public Library.

Entries are now being accepted for the 1946-47 annual contest, the results of which will be announced in the fall of 1947. The contest is open to Thespian-affiliated schools only. Entries should be addressed to The National Thespian Society, College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, Ohio.

## The Story of the Song, "Silent Night"

(Continued from page 11)

Round yon Virgin Mother and Child,  
Holy Infant so tender and mild,  
(Up full chorus and swell organ to climax.)  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

(Sustain organ softly with tune under:)

Narrator (Fading in): Yes, Franzl was just an ordinary boy... but with nimble fingers... for weaving... and something else which was a secret between his mother and himself. But now he became a man... it was no longer a secret. His tune was carried home by the organ builder, who then sang it for the Strassers, a well known Tyrolean quartette. These Strassers sold gloves and sang songs in the market squares of Europe. Now they had a new song to sing—Franz's song. But as they sang *Silent Night* over all the countryside, they forgot to mention that it belonged to him. That is how it came to be known as a folk-song. Only the director of the Royal Court Orchestra in Berlin grew curious about its origin... He wrote about it to Austria... and found out what you already know... that a modest man, an organist with nimble fingers, was the composer... Franz Xavier Gruber.

(Music: Organ continue tune, swelling into majestic finale.)

Announcer: You have been listening to the

DRAMATICS MAGAZINE



...s presentation of "The Birth of the Song, 'Silent Night,'" an original historical radio drama by Florence Felten French. This production was made possible by special arrangement with Walter H. Baker Company, Boston. Those appearing in the cast were—

**NOTE**

Minor changes in dialogue, sound effects and music may be made to suit your own production problems. However, no changes may be made in the announcer's line "... The Birth of the Song 'Silent Night,' ... by Florence Felten French. This production was made possible by special arrangement with Walter H. Baker Company, Boston."

### Staging *Julius Caesar*

(Continued from page 19)

*Julius Caesar*, I ran true to form. If this play had had the publicity campaign that it deserved our gross receipts would have been easily tripled. I did institute one innovation which brought some financial return. We sold Patron's Passes at \$1.00 to worthy citizens who wanted to support us. This pass entitled the holder to come to all the performances. The regular admission charge was 50 cents.

#### Educational Value

The idea of producing *Julius Caesar* at Aldrich High School was to make it a commemoration of the 2000th anniversary of Julius Caesar's first entry into Britain in 55 B.C. From start to finish it was considered primarily an educational project and only secondarily a dramatic production. Although it resulted in the finest dramatic program the school has ever produced, it was still chiefly an educational project. From the very beginning the entire faculty of 38 teachers gave their wholehearted interest and cooperation. The Advisory Board, headed by Mr. Scott, the principal, became constant consultants. Four key departments, English, Art, Manual Arts, and Home Economics, undertook the responsibility for four phases of production—Direction, Stage and Costume Design and Decoration, Stage Settings, and Costumes respectively. Almost all students were drawn into the work of some one or more of these departments. Never before had we attempted a project of such magnitude, and we found the results in every way commensurate with the size of the undertaking. *Julius Caesar* has become an unforgettable experience to many persons at Aldrich who had a part in its making. Note this excerpt from an extravagant but genuinely enthusiastic tribute from Mr. Hobbs, our supervising principal:

"Every so often in the experience of man something occurs which, because of the challenge and force of the situation, consolidates all of our efforts toward a pleasant and sometimes glorious ending. . . . So in the life of the school, the opportunity to mould the efforts of very force within to the successful conclusion of a major enterprise presents itself. Aldrich has just felt this in the impact of the play, *Julius Caesar*. The challenge of such an overwhelming undertaking as this was tremendous . . . everyone . . . has the right to glory in its success. . . . Aldrich is the richer for having had this challenging, cooperative enterprise of such tremendous magnitude. . . . It could not have been done without expert leadership and loyal cooperation. Of such sterling qualities is a good school made."

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THEY CANNOT RETURN, 2m, 3w. Royalty \$10.00	.50
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THE ROSE GARDEN, 2m, 3w. Royalty \$5.00	.50
MUSHROOMS COMING UP, 6 women. No royalty	.50

## CHRISTMAS PAGEANTS

### WHEN JESUS WAS BORN IN BETHLEHEM.

As two readers quote from the scripture we see unfolded the actual picture they have just described, climaxed by the Nativity Scene.

### WHY THE CHIMES RANG.

The old legend of the church bells which rang only when the perfect gift was placed on the altar, is now available in pantomime form with no royalty required

### LADY OF THE CROSSROADS.

Poor widowed Myrah places her baby in the empty arms of the statue, and it comes to life and blesses the people.

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## ON THE HIGH SCHOOL STAGE

News items published in this department are contributed by schools affiliated with  
The National Thespian Society

### Salinas, Calif.

THE SPIAN Troupe 501 of the Salinas Union High School, with Harold H. Ulrici as sponsor, held its first initiation of the season on September 26, with Doris Croci, Valma Arnold, and Kenneth Levy as the new members. The entire membership of the Troupe attended the drama clinic held on November 23 at the Modesto Junior College. The Troupe is also active in plans to have a drama clinic for the secondary schools in the area held at the San Jose State Teachers College. The first major play of the season, *Icebound*, was presented under the double cast system, with Mr. Ulrici as director. Additional honors came to Mr. Ulrici this fall upon his appointment as Thespian regional director for the State of California.—Gloria Scroggs, Secretary.

### Benton Harbor, Mich.

MEMBERS of Thespian Troupe 455 of the Benton Harbor High School opened their current season with a pot-luck supper in September at which time plans for the year were outlined. Among the activities planned for the fall semester is an half hour broadcast over Station KWZO of Kalamazoo. Thespian meetings will be addressed by outside speakers, with the first initiation of the season planned for early December. The first major play of

the year, *Pride and Prejudice*, was given on November 21, 22, with Miss Margaret Meyn as director. Miss Meyn is also extremely active as a member of the Twin City Players, a community theatre group which plans to present nine major plays this year. Thespian plans for the spring term call for the performance of a three-act play with proceeds to be used to defray expenses of those students who will attend the Dramatic Arts Conference at Indiana University next June.

### Roxana, Ill.

THE SPIANS of Troupe 556 are producing all major plays scheduled for this season at the Roxana Community High School, with sponsor Katharine Taylor as director. The first of these full-length plays, *Seven Keys to Baldpate*, was given to large audiences on November 1, 2. The second production, *The Queen's Husband*, will be offered on March 14, 15. April 25, 26 are the dates chosen for the third major play, *The Tavern*. Thespian will also serve as joint sponsors with the Music Department for the production of an original Variety Show tentatively scheduled for February. As their first contribution of this season members of Troupe 556 presented the one-act play, *Soap Opera*, as part of an exchange assembly program with the high school at Madison, Ill.—Gail Winstead, Secretary.

### Brownsville, Pa.

DRAMATIC students of the Brownsville High School (Thespian Troupe 187) are active again this season in bringing to the city the Pittsburgh Children's Theatre for at least three major plays. These performances are extremely popular with children and are always well supported by the school and community. The first school play of the year, *The King Rides By*, was given early in November, with Miss Jean E. Donahey as director. Plans are also being made for the observance of National Drama Week, February 9 through 15. "This looks like a very interesting and active year for our Troupe" reports Miss Donahey.

### Webster Groves, Mo.

THE advanced dramatics classes of the Webster Groves High School (Thespian Troupe 191) opened their current play production program with performances of *Snafu* on November 19 through 23, with Roberta Seibert directing. The same classes will offer performances of *She Stoops to Conquer* February 18 through 22. Dramatics classes were also responsible for the presentation of the one-act play, *So Wonderful in White*, for a school assembly program.—Barbara Lippert, Secretary.

### Newport News, Va.

BUT NOT GOODBY; a three-act play, was given to large audiences on November 7, 8, 9, by the Drama classes of the Newport News High School (Thespian Troupe 122), under the direction of Miss Dorothy M. Crane. Another major event of this semester for dramatics students was the presentation of the Fiftieth Anniversary Pageant by the City of Newport News in which over four hundred students appeared. The school is offering three semesters of curricular drama with full school credit.



## Trenton, Mich.

**T**ROUPE sponsor Cyril F. Leiter has made plans for a busy season of dramatic activities at the Slocum-Truax High School (Thespian Troupe 687). The year opened with the production of *The Fighting Littles* on November 21, 22, with the Junior class as sponsors. A second major production, *Hamlet*, will be presented by Thespians next March. Among the one-acts scheduled for assembly programs are: *The Sky's the Limit*, *I Shall be Waiting*, *Dress Reversal*, *Behind the Clouds*, and *For Whom the Telephone Rings*. Dramatics students are sponsoring a Speech and Entertainment Bureau for various groups in the school and community. A number of students witnessed the performance of *Hamlet*, with Maurice Evans, and a performance of *Cyrano de Bergerac*.—Mary Ellen Wiber, Secretary.

## Delaware, Ohio

**Y**OU Can't Take It With You, a three-act comedy, was presented on November 16 by the Sock and Buskin Club of the Willis High School (Thespian Troupe 420) as the first major production of the current year, with Virginia Klein as director. The second major play, *Pygmalion*, will be presented by Thespians on March 8. Thespians also plan to enter a one-act play in the State Drama Festival sponsored by the Ohio High School Speech League. Other dramatic events at this school planned for this season include the operetta, *Hansel and Gretel*, December 20, a revue on January 10, and the operetta, *The Vagabond King*, May 23. A number of students are active in the Radio Workshop established under Miss Klein's direction. Students attended performances of *The Glass Menagerie* and *Rose Marie* given in Columbus, Ohio, this fall.—Carol Steeves, Secretary.

## Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

**T**HREE major plays will be given this season at the Coeur d'Alene High School (Thespian Troupe 190), according to word received from Evelyn Townsend, dramatics director and troupe sponsor at this school. Barrie's *Mary Rose* will be staged on December 5, with the dramatics class as sponsors. On March 12 Thespians will follow with a performance of *Seventeen*. The third play, *Ladies in Retirement*, will also be given by Thespians, with April 22 chosen as the date of performance.

## Eudora, Kans.

**M**EMBERS of Thespian Troupe 686 of the Eudora High School opened their current season of dramatic activities with an evening of one-act plays presented on November 12, with Mrs. Thelma Haverty as director. The playbill consisted of the following plays: *The Flight of the Herons*, *Revenge*, *Be Home by Midnight*, and *The Happy Journey*. Thespians also presented a program of readings at one of the local churches early in November. Plans for the immediate future include the presentation of the operetta, *Jerry of Jericho Road*, on December 6, and a series of programs to be given by Thespians at the school assemblies.—Betty Brunk, Secretary.

## Miami, Fla.

**T**HE twelfth grade dramatics class of the Miami Edison Senior High School (Thespian Troupe 8) will sponsor a performance of the comedy, *What a Life*, on December 6, with Sophia P. Derbyshire as director. The second major play of this season, *Out of this World*, will be offered by Thespians later in the year. During the month of November the following one-acts were presented at the school assembly program: *Who Gets the Car Tonight?*, *Spring Is in the Air*, and *The Lord's Prayer*. A large number of dramatics students are attending this season's presentation of original one-act plays given by the University of Miami. Plans are also being made for a drama tournament for Miami and vicinity. Several Thespians are ap-

## GUIDE TO LEADING SCHOOLS OF SPEECH AND DRAMA

A 1-cent postal card addressed to each school listed below will bring you full particulars regarding the Speech and Drama Program.  
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pearing in radio programs given on Tuesdays  
and Saturdays over Station WGBS.—Barbara  
Webster, Secretary.

## Lawrence, Kans.

**M**AJOR dramatic activities for this semester at the Liberty Memorial High School (Thespian Troupe 157) include a production of the comedy, *A Little Honey*, on December 6, with Thespians as sponsors, and the presentation of a Christmas one-act play, with a choral group. Mrs. Delbert D. Neis has charge of the dramatics program.—Lois Fuller, Secretary.

## Welch, W. Va.

**T**HE presentation of *Macbeth*, by a professional company, was well received by a large audience this fall at the Welch High School (Thespian Troupe 204). The appearance of this company was sponsored by Thespians and members of the dramatics club, with Alyce Mae Gay as director of dramatics. The fall term has also included the performance of a one-act, *The Fire at Bradford*, given in ob-

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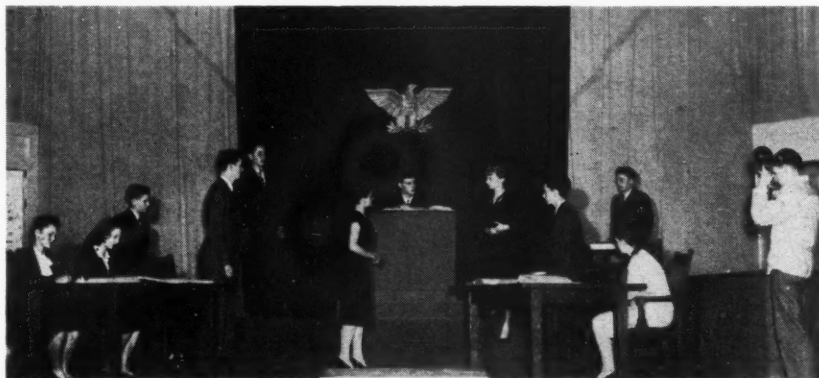
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servance of Fire Prevention Week. Other one-acts to be given for assembly this season include *For Whom the Telephone Rings*, *Bobby Sox*, *Too Many Marys*, *Fixer's Inc.*, and *Take a Letter*. The study of stage architecture and make-up is receiving attention this season at dramatics club meetings.—Peggy Bulis, Sec'y.



Scene from a production of *The Night of January 16th* presented at the Bloomsburg, Pa., High School (Thespian Troupe 158), with Mrs. Harriet H. Kline as director.

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### Logan, W. Va.

THE Junior class performance of the comedy, *Sing for Your Supper*, late in November marked the opening of the current dramatics season at the Logan High School (Thespian Troupe 168), with Thelma Juergensmeyer as director. In December the Music Department will offer the operetta, *Hulda of Holland*, as the second major attraction of the fall term. Plans for this season also include the presentation of some thirty one-act plays over the local radio station.

### Coronado, Calif.

THE Spotlighters' performance of *Seven Sisters* on October 18 marked the opening of the current dramatics season at the Coro-

nado High School, with Beatrice Bourke as director and troupe sponsor. The Drama Department will offer *You Can't Take It With You* on December 13 as the second major play of the season. The third three-act play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, will be given in March with the Senior class as sponsors. The spring term will also see the production of the musical show, *Hi-Jinx*, given as an all-student production. Dramatics club meetings are being devoted to a study of make-up, theatre history, costuming, and scene design.—Melody Hyde, Secretary.

### Rochester, N. H.

THE annual New England Secondary School Drama Festival was held on April 26, 27

at the Spaulding High School, with Helen Bartel, Clarice Tatman, and Helen K. Brown as judges. A rating of excellent was given to *Mr. F*, given by the Revere, Mass., High School, *Parting at Insdorf*, given by the Bulkeley School of New London, Conn., *Balcony Scene*, given by the Technical High School of Springfield, Mass., *Caleb Stone's Death Watch*, presented by the Kennebunk, Me., High School, and to *Rosalind*, staged by the East Senior High School of Pawtucket, R. I. Other schools participating in the festival were: West Senior High School, Pawtucket, R. I. (*The Open Door*); Mexico, Me. (*Mooncalf Mugford*); Spaulding High School, (*Maid of France*); St. Johnsbury, Vt., Academy (*Heritage of Wimhole Street*); Norwich, Conn., Free Academy (*The Cradle Song*), and Springfield, Vt., High School (*Mooncalf Mugford*). Thespian National Director Barbara Wellington of the B. M. C. Durfee High School, Fall River, Mass., served as president of the Executive Council.

### Columbus, Ohio

UPPER Arlington High School students (Troupe 332), with Frank H. Jakes as dramatics director, are looking forward to an extremely interesting program of play productions this year. On November 22, 23, members of Troupe 332 presented performances of the new play, *A Date With Judy*, with Mr. Jakes directing. Late in February the Senior class will offer either *January Thaw* or *Ramshackle Inn*. The third long play, *Our Town*, will be staged on May 9, 10 with Thespians as sponsors. Another important event of the spring semester will be the presentation of an original revue on March 28, 29, with the instrumental and vocal music departments co-operating. Thespians are active at present in establishing a series of exchange programs with other high schools in the area. Plans are also under consideration for the formation of a children's theatre with Thespians as directors.



Scene from *The Man Who Came to Dinner* presented by members of Thespian Troupe 330 of the Watertown, S. Dak., High School, with Florence M. Bruhn directing.



# Plays for School Production

## ANGEL STREET

By Patrick Hamilton

After three solid years on Broadway this Victorian thriller is now available in certain territories. 2 m., 3 f. (2 policemen). 75c. Restricted in a very few places. (Royalty, where available, quoted on application.)

## BLITHE SPIRIT

By Noel Coward

From a very novel situation Noel Coward has fashioned a play which is hilarious as only a Coward farce can be. The *New York Sun* stated: "Mr. Coward has never, I think, been happier in his inventions or more adept." 2 m., 5 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$50.00.)

## THIS BEING YOUNG

By Richard Young

The saga of Pam Powers, a fourteen-year-old, up-to-the-minute young lady who is burdened with all the troubles of the world is bringing up her parents. 5 m., 7 f. 60c. (Royalty, \$10.00.)

## BUT NOT GOODBYE

By George Seaton

Amiable fantasy about a ghost who saves his family from bankruptcy in a highly amusing manner. A John Golden production on Broadway. 8 m., 7 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## THIN ICE

By Betty Ann and Ray H. Mattingley

The amusing story of how the Edwards family gets its ego and several family vertebrae back into place during one eventful Christmas vacation. 6 m., 9 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## SOLDIER'S WIFE

By Rose Franken

This Martha Scott vehicle is concerned with young Mrs. Rogers, who finds herself the author of a best-seller—and with many problems. 2 m., 3 f. \$2.00. (Royalty, \$50.00.)

## UNCERTAIN WINGS

By Robert Hill and Floyd Crutchfield

An adventure of youth moving with zest and humor against a background of High School sports and dramatics. 4 m., 5 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## YOU TOUCHED ME

By Tennessee Williams and Donald Windham

Tennessee Williams, author of the Broadway hit, "The Glass Menagerie", co-authors here a vigorous adult comedy. 3m., 3f. \$2.00. (Royalty, \$50.00.)

## CLAUDIA

By Rose Franken

Popular comedy success. Child-wife Claudia meets three crises which lead her into womanhood. Tenderly, humorously told, the story has universal appeal—a big hit! 3 m., 5 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$50.00.)

## THE FIGHTING LITTLES

By Caroline Francke

Booth Tarkington's recent novel makes an amiable and delightful family comedy. Through three acts the quick-tempered Littles squabble their way through differences in viewpoint and ridiculous situations without even knowing how funny they are. 5 m., 10 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## THE DOCTOR HAS A DAUGHTER

By George Batson

The author of the popular *Every Family Has One* relates the comic adventures and misadventures of a small town junior miss whose over-active imagination gets everyone into hot water but finally emerges triumphant. 5 m., 7 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## EVERY FAMILY HAS ONE

By George Batson

The eccentric Reardons, overimpressed with their ancestry, are brought sharply to their senses when cantankerous Grandma and a pretty visiting cousin drag skeletons from the closets, causing comic havoc. 5 m., 7 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## I LIKE IT HERE

By A. B. Shiffrin

First produced at the John Golden Theatre in New York. Our old friend, Mr. Fixit, who arranges life satisfactorily for the rest of the characters, is back again in this sprightly comedy. 6 m., 3 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$35.00)

## LIFE OF THE PARTY

By Marrijane and Joseph Hayes

New comedy hit by the authors of "And Came The Spring" and "Come Rain or Shine." 7 m., 10 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## SPRING GREEN

By Florence Ryerson and Colin Clements

Most often produced by Thespian-Affiliated Schools during the 1944-45 season. Another funny play by the authors of the outstanding *Ever Since Eve* and *June Mad*; about a boy whose father doesn't understand him and a girl whose mother understands her only too well. 8 m., 7 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## JANIE

By Josephine Bentham and Herschel Williams

The hilarious Broadway hit which tells what happens when a cavalcade of exuberant fellows in uniform meets a bevy of high school young ladies and they decide to throw a party. 13 m., 8 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$50.00.)

## THE GHOST TRAIN

By Arnold Ridley

Suspense predominates in this fascinating mystery-thriller which tells how daring rum-runners take advantage of a New England legend concerning a phantom train. 7 m., 4 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## SLICE IT THIN

By Al Moritz and Ed. Heghinian

This Blackfriars Guild success in New York is concerned with the Coleman family and its uproarious entanglement with Hollywood. 5 m., 5 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## THE RICH FULL LIFE

By Vina Delmar

A Gilbert Miller production in New York, with Judith Evelyn in the leading role. A drama of dignity, sense and value. The story is simple and about all of us. 75c. (Royalty, \$35.00.)

## EVER SINCE EVE

By Florence Ryerson and Colin Clements

This comedy of youth by the authors of *June Mad* is the mirthful story of Susan Blake and her hectic experiences as assistant editor of the school paper. Cloth, \$1.50; paper, 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## LITTLE DOLLY DOLLARS

By Charles George

The story of a young, charming and democratic heiress who, under the guardianship of a "stuffed-shirt" Uncle, finally makes him see her side of romance. 5 m., 7 f. 60c. (Royalty, \$10.00.)

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Bellevue, Wash.

MAKE-UP, radio, and play production were among the subjects discussed at dramatic club meetings this past season at the Overlake High School (Troupe 634), with Miss Margaret Van Winkle as director and troupe sponsor. The first three-act play of the year, *Ever Since Eve*, was given to a large audience on December 7. The second three-act play, *Footloose*, was given on April 12. Both plays were directed by Miss Van Winkle.—Noel Nauman, Secretary.

Pontiac, Mich.

MEMBERS of the Playcrafters, dramatics club at the Pontiac High School (Troupe 499), presented *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* on October 18, 19, in continuation of their Children's Theatre program which was inaugurated last season under the direction of W. N. Viola. For their second major play

of this season the Playcrafters are now rehearsing *Seventeen*, scheduled for presentation the first week in December. The Playcrafters rank as one of the oldest high school dramatics clubs in the United States, with a long and distinguished history of play productions extending back to September, 1926, when the group was formally organized under Mr. Viola's direction. Besides the presentation of plays, the Playcrafters sponsor a Parents' Reception each semester. The program usually consists of two or three one-act plays, followed by refreshments for parents and close friends. This past summer Mr. Viola served as director of the Cheyenne, Wyoming, Children's Theatre.—Harrison C. Sudborough.

St. Clairsville, Ohio

FOUR major plays make up this season's production program at the St. Clairsville High School (Troupe 429) with Anna B. Lentz as director. The first of these, *Snafu*, was given by Thespians on July 12, 13. The second play, *Daddy Long-Legs*, was presented by the Junior class on November 22. Thespians will give *Our Town* on March 14. The fourth play, title unannounced, will be given near the close of the spring term. The fall term also includes the production of two one-acts, *Reciprocity* and *The Valiant*. Playwriting, make-up, and stage mechanics are among the subjects considered at current meetings of the dramatics club.—Mary Waddell, Secretary.

York, Pa.

MEMBERS of Troupe 520 of the William Penn Senior High School opened their program for the current season with the production of three one-act plays on October 20. The playbill consisted of *Angel Child*, *She Was Only a Farmer's Daughter*, and *Thanks Awfully*. The first major dramatic production of the season, *It's Mary's Lucky Day*, will be presented on December 5, 6, 7, with troupe sponsor Leon C. Miller directing. Members of Troupe 520 plan to participate in the drama festival scheduled for this season at the Millersville State Teachers College.—Nancy March, Secretary.

Mount Vernon, Ind.

THE Footlight Performers of the Mount Vernon High School (Troupe 116) opened the present season with an extremely successful performance of the three-act comedy, *Foot-Loose*, presented on November 14 with Miss Catharine L. Howard directing. This club will also be responsible for the production of at least three one-act plays this year. The first of these, *Three's A Crowd*, was given on October 4. The other two one-acts, *His Cross* and *The Snow Man*, will be presented during the spring semester. Monthly meetings of the dramatics club are based upon articles published in *Dramatics Magazine*.—Joyce Stevens, Secretary.



Scene from a production of *Moonshine and Honeysuckle* staged at the Army and Navy Academy (Thespian Troupe 130), Carlsbad, California, under the direction of Mrs. Wm. Currier Atkinson.



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### Somerset, Ohio

**M**EMBERS of Troupe 332 of the Upper Arlington High School of Columbus, Ohio, had charge of the formal installation of Troupe 693 early this spring at the Somerset High School, with Mr. H. L. Bland as founder and sponsor. An impressive ceremony was presented by the visiting Thespians from Columbus. Plans were made late this past spring for a very active dramatics program this season. Troupe officers are: Pauline Shaw, Mary Lou Phillips, Robin Anspach, and Lois Nance Treat.—Paul Rhoads, Reporter.

### Camden, Ark.

**T**HESPIAN Troupe 689 of the Camden High School held its formal installation on March 28 in the school auditorium, with sponsor Susie Smith in charge. The impressive candlelight ceremony was followed by the presentation of two one-acts, *The Rose Garden* and *For Better or For Worse*, both under the direction of Miss Smith. The ceremony and presentation of plays was open to the public.

A number of projects in dramatics have been planned for the coming months.—Elizabeth Ann Harrell, Secretary.

### Matewan, W. Va.

**T**HE fourth annual play festival sponsored by the dramatics club of the Magnolia High School (Thespian Troupe 189), was held on April 12 with the following plays presented: *So Wonderful in White*, *Sugar and Spice*, *Smokescreen*, and *Excitement to Order*. The festival was under the direction of troupe sponsor, Mrs. Kathryn M. Talbert, with Paul Dempsey as critic judge. Pauline Hatfield was given the honor of "Best Actress."

### Hot Springs, Ark.

**T**HE 1945-46 season was one of the outstanding years in dramatics for students at the Hot Springs High School (Thespian Troupe 78), with Loss Alexander as director and troupe sponsor. The season got underway with a production of *Icebound* on December 7. During the Christmas Season the annual candlelight service was held with a cast of seventy-five.

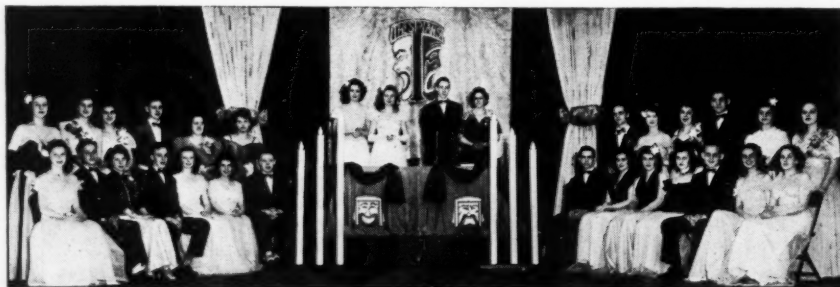
Among the one-acts given for assembly and other school purposes were: *The Broken Rehearsal*, *Wildcat Willie's Lucky Number*, *For Whom the Telephone Rings*, *The Exchange*, *Overtones*, *Where's That Report Card?* and *The Vane Effort*. Thespians played the leading roles in two radio programs presented over the local radio station. A double cast was used for the performances of the Senior class play, *Spring Dance*, on April 4, 6. Dramatics students received a rating of superior in the Speech Festival held at North Little Rock on April 4, 6. The year closed with an evening of one-acts, *Three's a Crowd*, *The Lost Kiss*, and *May Moon*, presented on May 3 with the Junior class as sponsors.—Jane Dwiggins, Secretary.

### Edgemont, S. D.

**M**EMBERS of the Thespian Troupe at the Edgemont High School, with Mrs. Mary B. Uhl as sponsor, presented an evening of one-act plays on March 13 with the playbill consisting of *Rehearsal*, *New Girl in Town*, *Escape*, and *Even Exchange*. Two of the plays were later given at the Veterans' Hospital nearby. Thespians also assisted with the production of the Junior class play, *The Scarecrow Creeps*, on April 25, and with the production of the Senior class play, *Crazy House*, presented on May 17. Twelve students qualified for Thespian membership at a ceremony held on May 21.

### Columbus, Ohio

**S**UPERIOR rating at the finals of the state-wide one-act play contest held at the Ohio State University on April 30 was given to entries given by the following high schools: (Class A) Delaware Wills and Massillon Washington, both Thespian-affiliated schools; (Class B) Worthington; (Class C) Liberty, Doylestown Chippewa, and Fredericksburg. The festival was sponsored by the Ohio High School Speech League with Dr. Bert Emsley as acting director.



Formal installation (season of 1945-46) of Thespian Troupe 680 at the South High School, Omaha, Nebraska, with Miss Mabel Rasmussen as founder and sponsor.



## What's New Among Books and Plays

Review Staff:

Mary Ella Bovee, Blandford Jennings, Marion Stuart, Marion V. Brown, Elmer S. Crowley, Robert Ensley, Helen Movius, Roberta D. Sheets.

Reviews appearing in this department aim to help our readers keep up with recent books and plays. Opinions expressed are those of the reviewer only. Mention of a book or play in this department does not constitute an endorsement by Dramatics Magazine.

Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 6 East 39th Street, New York, N. Y.

*Pick-Up Girl*, a play in three acts by Elsa Shelley. 10 m., 9w. Royalty.—. The action of this play takes place in the juvenile court. The fifteen-year-old girl who is the heroine of the play has been brought into court as a delinquent. As the action develops the story, it reveals the sordid poverty, careless living, and general ignorance of the characters as one after another they are examined by the judge. Parents who leave their children to roam the streets, those who exploit these young people, and the bewildered young victims themselves are all quite realistically characterized. Here is a story frequently told in our courts, in our newspapers and in private gossip, but which, presented as a play, becomes a forceful instrument in arousing public opinion. The play is suitable for welfare organizations, P.T.A.'s and other philanthropic societies. It is not for high school actors or audiences, however.—*Helen Movius*.

*First Lady*, a comedy in three acts, by Katharine Dayton and George S. Kaufman. 13 m., 12 w., extras, Royalty.—. This charming, witty, fast-moving comedy of Washington life in diplomatic circles in somewhat exaggerated and slightly satirical, but delightfully entertaining. The granddaughter of a former Presi-

dent, whose husband is Secretary of State, has plans to put her husband into the White House. By use of womanly wiles, a little intrigue, and rather shrewd politics, she succeeds in triumphing over her rival, vanquishing all opposition and leading her husband into the nomination. Although many characters come and go on the stage most of the time, they are attractive and interesting, as witty conversation and sparkling repartee passes swiftly from one to another. This play would be an interesting choice for colleges and Little Theaters, but is rather advanced for high schools.—*Helen Movius*.

Walter Baker Company, 178 Tremont Street, Boston 11, Mass.

*There's a Song in the Air*, a dramatic Christmas service in one act, by Paul Nagy Jr. 15-20 characters, men and women, in addition to choirs or glee club. The story of the Nativity is told through scripture, song, shadows, tableaux. Many of the familiar, always beautiful Christmas songs and carols are used. The service would be most appropriate for a Sunday School or church but could be used as a Christmas program by elementary or high school pupils. Setting consists of blue curtain with white sheeting in center; relatively easy to stage.—*Mary Louise Williams*.

*Little Plays from Big Authors*, by Jean Provence. The volume contains dramatizations of stories and scenes from novels, usually found in the high school curriculum. The arrangements stay very close to the original words, the settings are simple. As material for making English classes more entertaining they are to be recommended.—*Roberta Dinwiddie Sheets*.

*Stevenson Dramatized for Young People*, by Henry Thomas. The author has dramatized the best known of Stevenson's novels: *Treasure Island*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *Kidnapped*, and several of his short stories. The casts are large in most cases and the dramatizations are broken into short acts. The material is more interesting for class work than for public presentation.—*Roberta Dinwiddie Sheets*.

*Easy Swing Time Novelties*, by A. D. Laufe. Royalty free. This collection of four clever romances, written in light poetic form, is spoken and sung to the rhythm of familiar tunes and should provide something different in entertainment for groups wanting short clever program numbers. Included are *Pygmalion* and *Galatea* in *Swing Time*, *Cindy Swings It*, *Swing Low*, *Sweet Juliet*, and *Alladin and the Vamp*. As the titles indicate, these are modern take-offs on popular stories. *Pygmalion* runs a beauty parlor while *Alladin's "Jeanie"* has light brown hair. Something different and well suited to assembly programs.—*Elmer S. Crowley*.

Eldridge Entertainment House, Inc., Franklin, Ohio and Denver 2, Colo.

*Mysteries for Radio*, by Winston Weathers. May be presented over public address systems by amateurs without payment of royalty, and over unsponsored radio programs with the purchase of 5 copies. This collection of "Sessions of Suspense" is intended for practice and enjoyment. The sketches are timed for fifteen minutes or for thirty minutes. There are casts of varying lengths, each containing both men and women characters. The mysteries are mainly horror tales and supernatural murder thrillers. A convenient collection for material for training in radio technique.—*Helen Movius*.

## For Christmas Programs

**AND CHRISTMAS CAME.** White. 1946 pantomime by the author of "And the Ghost Walked" and other successful entertainments. 5 characters and back stage chorus. An old fashioned melodrama (with villain and all) that will make fun for any Christmas program. A lark for cast of young people or adults. .... .50

**BIRDS' CHRISTMAS CAROL.** One-act comedy. Kate Douglas Wiggin's famous story dramatized by Pauline Phelps. 4 m. 6 f. Characters: Mrs. Bird and Carol. Ma Ruggles and her brood. 35 min. 1 int. The story, so brimming with comedy and the spirit of Christmas, has been faithfully revived, and will continue to be loved through the years. .... .50

**CHOIRS OF GOD.** Leota Hulse Black. 15 min. Pathos and beauty combine to make this reading one that will long be remembered by its hearers. Carols may be sung, or spoken, by a choir (off stage, if preferred) or may be sung or spoken by the reader. .... .60

**CHRISTMAS BAZAAR.** Hazel S. Mahood. 1946 One Act play. 4 f. 20 min. Three women learn the true Spirit of Christmas from a poor woman who has come to wash dishes at the bazaar dinner. A colorful play centered around a booth which is being decorated and stocked for the bazaar. .... .60

**CHRISTMAS WITH THE FINCH FAMILY.** Kathryn Wayne. 1-act play. 2 m. 3 f. Int. 30 min. Father and Mother Finch and Grandma are preparing to sacrifice their own plans for Harold and Gwen. By a turn of events, the young people are awakened to their own selfish outlook on the Holiday Season. .... .50

**JUNIOR MISS'S CHRISTMAS.** From the Broadway Play. A very funny reading ending in a sweet scene with the would-be sophisticated Junior Miss and the doll she had scorned. .... .60

**MA MAKES MERRY.** Leota Hulse Black. 12 min. One of the best readings for the Season that we know. Ma Peasley and her brood are trimming the tree and Ma, with her usual good philosophy mixed with good fun, is the center of the group. Her thoughts concerning the first Christmas are very beautiful. .... .50

**MERRY CHRISTMAS.** Pauline Phelps. From first act of "Little Women." 6 f. 15 min. This lovely play from Louisa Alcott's beloved book is much in demand. At the suggestion of their mother the four "Little Women" take their breakfast to a needy family. .... .50

**ONE NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM.** Karin Asbrand. Pageant Play. 13 principals and angel chorus. A touching and beautiful presentation of the Nativity scene as it affected the hearts and lives of three thieves, one of them a boy. Introduces familiar carols. Music for two lovely original songs, one a lullaby for Mary. .... .50

**STRANGE CHRISTMAS DINNER.** Margaret Cousins. 1946 cutting from an enchanting story. 15 min. .... .60

These are selected from a very complete and well chosen list of Christmas Entertainments.

## WETMORE DECLAMATION BUREAU

Sioux City, Iowa

Mention DRAMATICS MAGAZINE

## EDUCATORS GUIDE TO FREE FILMS

1946 edition now ready, 1381 titles, 374 new titles, all new titles starred. The postage required to find these films would cost you many times cost of FILM GUIDE—\$4.00. Free on request—reprint of "Some Case Illustrations of the Use of Free Films," by Dr. John Guy Fowlkes.

## EDUCATORS PROGRESS SERVICE

Randolph, Wisconsin

Mention DRAMATICS MAGAZINE

# CONTEST PLAYS

**BALCONY SCENE**, by Donald Elser. A Drama in One Act. 4m, 4w. Books, 50c. Royalty, \$5. Formerly published in *Dramatics Magazine*. Since Row, Peterson and Company has acquired the rights to the play, all those desiring to produce **Balcony Scene** should get written permission from the publishers, at 1911 Ridge Avenue, Evanston, Illinois, or at 131 E. 23rd Street, New York 10.

## Highest Rating in Idaho

In a letter to the author, Mrs. Roberta Cheney, Director of Dramatics at the Buhl (Idaho) High School, writes: "I thought you would be interested to know that my group, who used your **Balcony Scene**, won the District Dramatic Contest, and received a "Superior" (highest) rating in the state contest. One other school, Boise, also received a "Superior" rating, so we tied for first place in the state of Idaho.

"I want to express my appreciation to you for your fine play. The comments on judging sheets ran like this: 'At last a fantasy one can enjoy.' 'Something new and original.' 'Such a clever and amusing treatment of the subject.'"

## First Place in Massachusetts "Superior" in New England Drama Festival

S. V. Doane, Director of Dramatics at Technical High School, Springfield, Mass., in a letter to Mr. Elser, states: "Our first step in selecting a Festival play for next spring is to find out if you have written other one-act plays that we could use. We had such a worthwhile experience with **Balcony Scene**, that we want more." Mr. Elser informs us that Technical High School won First Place in the Massachusetts state festival, and a "Superior" rating in the New England Drama Festival.

## "Superior" in Ohio

**Balcony Scene**, used by Thespian Troupe 399, Mineral Ridge, Ohio, won the county contest, placed "Superior" in the regional contest, and "Superior" in the state contest.

## Two Other Strong Contest Plays

**MIND-SET**, by Merle Bouton Young. A Fantasy in One Act. 2m, 2w. Books, 50c. Royalty, \$5. Frank, controversial, exciting, and clever. Consult the Row-Peterson catalog for plot details.

**HIGH WINDOW**, by Verne Powers. A Melodrama in One Act. 2m, 3w. Books, 50c. Royalty, \$5. Perfect for contest purposes. Consult catalog for plot.

## ROW, PETERSON AND COMPANY

1911 Ridge Avenue, Evanston, Illinois  
131 E. 23rd Street 1233 S. Hope Street  
New York 10 Los Angeles 15

Say you saw it in *Dramatics Magazine*.

Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York, N. Y.

*It's My Turn*, a collection of dramatic character sketches by Clay Franklin. No royalty. These twelve entertaining monologues comprise the third volume of this author's lively sketches. In them we meet many interesting characters, men and women in true-to-life situations although somewhat removed from the usual trite and commonplace sometimes found in monologues. These sketches are attractive for both platform reading and for one's own personal enjoyment.—*Helen Movius*.

*Remarkable Baby*, a farce in one act, by John Kirkpatrick. 3 m., 5 w. Royalty, \$5. The members of the Gilwilly family have definite ideas as to how their ten-weeks-old baby should be reared. So does Uncle Max who, through ventriloquism, has the baby tell the family where to "get off." And Max does rather well until Lola, the girl whom he is supposed to marry, discovers his trick and has the baby throw a few remarks at him. A play with excellent opportunities for acting.—*Ernest Bavely*.

Banner Play Bureau, Inc., San Francisco 2, California

*The Hope of the World*, a Christmas Pageant in eight episodes by Helen M. Roberts. The number of performers may vary. Royalty \$5.00. This impressive and beautiful Christmas pageant may be given simply or as elaborately as facilities will permit. It is suitable for community, church or school. It is divided into eight episodes which tell the old Christmas story by the use of a narrator, speech choir and singing choir. The story is carried forward with tableaux presenting Biblical Christmas scenes.—*Helen Movius*.

*Springtime for Johnny*, a comedy in three acts, by Bonneviere Arnaud. 6 m., 6 w. Royalty, \$15. This gay, rollicking comedy opens in the sporting goods department of the Robbins' Department Store. There is much excitement over the arrival of a new muscle-building machine. The nephew of the proprietor arrives and is mistaken for the demonstrator of the machine. He accepts this role and as a result becomes involved in complications which enmesh him until he is recognized; whereupon he declares himself to his uncle, and the plot begins to move toward a highly satisfactory close for all concerned.—*Helen Movius*.

The Dramatic Publishing Co., 59 East Van Buren Street, Chicago.

*The Would Be Gentleman*, by Moliere, arranged for production by Roland Fernand, 9 m., 4 w. and extras. Non-royalty. Several years ago I made a prompt book of *L'Homme de Bien*, so I know what an excellent job Mr. Fernand has done. The play is such good fun and our high school students see altogether too little Moliere. M. Jourdain wishes to be a gentleman, so he hires a dancing master, a fencing master, a music master and a master of philosophy to make him one. He is their easy prey as well as that of a count, who gets huge sums from him under pretense of ingratiating M. Jourdain with a marchioness. Madame Jourdain and the daughter are content to be bourgeois and disapprove of the merchant's social aspiration. The daughter and her lover finally outwit M. Jourdain and initiate him as a "mamamouchi" in a Turkish ceremony that is hilarious. There are good helps for the director not familiar with the French. The scene is one interior and the costuming makes the play colorful. Highly recommend.—*Roberta Dinwiddie Sheets*.

*Don't Open Till Christmas*, by Rilla Carlisle. 3 m., 4 w. Non-royalty but purchase of seven copies required. This is a thoroughly wholesome one-act light comedy. Amateur drama groups with little acting experience may undertake with excellent results to themselves and to their audience. "We're each giving him (Dad) something that we want for ourselves," observes Janet, a young member of the Bell family. When it is discovered that Dad purchased gifts for each member of the family,

without thinking of himself first, Mrs. Bell and the children waste no time in seeing that Dad, too, gets the gift he wants—a lodge emblem.—*Elmer Strong*.

Row, Peterson & Company, Evanston, Ill.

*The More the Merrier*, a comedy in three acts, by Anne Ferring Weatherly. 6 m., 9 w. Royalty quoted upon application. One interior set. This is another of those plays about teenage people popular with high school drama groups. The central character is sixteen-year-old Jimmie, in whom Henry Aldrich and Andy Hardy would find a worthy competitor. While his parents are away on a brief vacation, Jimmie decides to raise funds for the establishment of a Teen Town in his community by staging a "white-elephant sale" on the front yard. He is aided by his young sister, Ellie, and Hank Robbins. The inevitable misunderstandings and complications arise in rapid order. But as the curtain is about to fall on Act III, Jimmie is complimented by no less a dignitary than Judge Washburn for having taken the initiative in establishing a recreation center for the young people of the community. The play presents no major production problems.—*Ernest Bavely*.

*The Inner Willy*, a comedy in three acts, by Bettye Knapp. 4 m., 7 w. One interior set. Royalty quoted upon application. This play is "different," since its cast includes a character, whose presence gives the play its title—the hero's "inner self," visible only to the hero. He's a cross between Puck and Harvey, and any producer can see here the possibilities for comedy. Also in the cast are the three maiden aunts, who have given the hero a "beautiful and sheltered life," and it is Willoughby's inner self, urging Willoughby to assert himself that creates the delightful humor and fun. This comedy is a worthwhile experiment.—*Mary Ellen Bove*.

*Maybe You're Wrong*, a comedy in three acts, by Anita Waltrip Crust. 8 m., 8 w. One interior set. Royalty quoted upon application. There is a definite message intended in this play, since it presents the case of "delinquent parents" and how their children settled it. However, this timely "preaching" does not in any way overshadow the natural, easy comedy. A big cast of equally strong and varied parts is agreeable to the average high school director. You can't miss in choosing this play, since it is both good writing and good theatre.—*Mary Ella Bove*.

Wetmore Declamation Bureau  
1631 South Paxton St., Sioux City, Iowa

*And Christ Came*, a pantomime, by Kate Alice White. Price, 50c. The sad tale of how the Widow Smith and her beautiful daughter, Gwendolyn, are held under the domination of the miserly Ebenezer until rescued by tall, dark, and handsome Miles Mintern of Hollywood, offers a variety of opportunities for comical action. Highly recommended for school programs.

*The Strange Christmas Dinner*, a reading, by Margaret Cousins. 60c. This is a beautifully written story of how the appearance of Charles Dickens brings the true Christmas spirit to a modern Scrooge by the name of Mr. Grubb. Ideal for presentation by schools, churches and community groups.

*Herbie's Christmas Present*, a comedy in one act, by Marjorie M. Williams. 1m., 6w. Non-royalty. 50c. Herbie's gift for his girl is the cause of all the action in this delightful playlet well suited to the needs of children of the upper grades and junior high school. The play is easy to stage. The action takes place in the Sanders' livingroom trimmed for the Christmas Season.

*Christmas Bazaar*, a play in one-act, by Hazel S. Mahood. 3 w. 50c. Mrs. Harris and Mrs. Vance learn the true meaning of the Christmas spirit from a poor woman who comes to wash dishes at their bazaar dinner. Easy to stage. Recommended for teen-age groups.—*Elmer Strong*.



*And Came the Spring, Come Rain or Shine, Life of the Party and Now—*

## COME OVER TO OUR HOUSE

By MARRIJANE and JOSEPH HAYES

8 MALES  
10 FEMALES  
INTERIOR  
MODERN  
COSTUMES



BOOKS  
75 CENTS  
ROYALTY  
\$25.00

As presented by the Jack and Jill Players of Chicago

Comedy. 3 acts. A new play compounded of the same mixture of comedy lines, fast and farcical situations, and a worthwhile theme, that have made the other plays by these authors such outstanding successes. The story revolves around Jay Eldridge—a serious lad with a great talent for classical music who learns, when he meets the right girl (or is she the wrong girl?), that he also has a flair for swing, and boogie-woogie. This lands him in the school vaudeville—and a carload of trouble. The trouble reaches out and, as the play dances a merry leap-frog of exuberant, youthful fun, it involves his grandmother, his widowed mother's two (no, three) romances, a Hollywood scout and the Russian conductor of the symphony orchestra. The conductor offers a scholarship—and the scout offers a Hollywood audition. Dilemma. Of course everyone offers a way out. But Jay,

with the help of a stageful of comic absurdities, reaches his own conclusions. The three Eldridge kids, all bent on running their poor mother's life, learn the childishness of their selfishness and Mrs. Eldridge learns the importance of love. A clever, swift and funny show, studded with the bright jargon of modern youth; sure to entertain any audience. Ideal for high schools and recommended without reservation.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The boy who plays the part of Jay does not have to be a musician as the piano is not played on the stage.

"We think the play is delightful and ought to have a splendid sale."—MARIE AGNES FOLEY, Jack and Jill Players, Chicago, Ill.

*Warm, Human and Riotously Funny*

## BUT FAIR TOMORROW

By DOUGLAS PARKHURST

5 Males, 9 Females. Interior. Books, 75 Cents. Royalty, \$25.00

The comedy centers around Barbara's (Babs), attempts to set to rights the lives of all who come into her life including her bachelor uncle, Walter; her brother Randy, and her older sister, Louise. The plot concerns the arrival of a young airplane pilot, Phillip Ward, whose close resemblance to a popular young movie actor causes many highly humorous complications during the course of planning a Charity Bazaar sponsored by the Sophomore Class of which Babs is president. Babs persuades the young pilot that Louise should have more attention, so Louise is taken for a plane ride by Phillip to Union City famous as a "Marrying Town" for eloping couples. Louise greatly enjoys Phil's charm and

attentions to the dismay of her fiancée, Ralph Mason, the local high school teacher, who also has the young brother, Randy, on his hands since some back work in history must be made up by the young star player before he is eligible to play in the State Semi-finals. Things do not at all turn out the way Babs plans, but the play comes to a happy and amusing conclusion full of surprise and action. This play is highly recommended for high school production.

"... written with tender and yet humorous regard for family problems complicated by teen age management ... characters nice to know."—Terre Haute (Ind.) Tribune.

## SAMUEL FRENCH

25 West 45th Street, New York 19, N. Y. (Founded 1830) 811 West 7th Street, Los Angeles 14, Calif



Photo by Fred Fehl

Walter Huston in a scene from  
the Broadway presentation

# "Apple of His Eye"

by Kenyon Nicholson and Charles Robinson

MARC CONNELLY—  
"A great comedy!"

JOHN STEINBECK—  
"I loved it!"

"LIFE" MAGAZINE—  
"Audiences were enthusiastic—an appealing  
comedy with sweet cidery smell."

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE—  
"Pungent dialogue and brilliant  
performances."

THE EVENING SUN—  
"The cause for intelligent rejoicing."

As we go to press with this announcement, "Apple of His Eye," under the auspices of The Theatre Guild and Jed Harris, is playing to capacity houses in a brilliantly successful road tour. This grand new comedy hit, with its single set and balanced cast of five women and five men, is ideal for amateur production. Walter Huston plays the lead in this outstanding play. Despite the continuing run of the road tour, "Apple of His Eye" is released in some areas. Be sure to write well in advance of your intended production to determine whether the play may be produced now in your locality.

**The Story:** The drama critic of the *New York World Telegram* described this story as "... a delicately wrought gem of comedy about the queer behavior of a middle-aged reasonable man who, much to his own surprise and distress, finds himself the victim of love's tyranny—and for a girl young enough to be his daughter. The innocent cause of his unfamiliar pangs is a temporary housekeeper. . . . She is a sweet efficient girl who is as unaware of Sam Stover's (Mr. Huston's) ailment, as are all others except Sam's confidant, Tude." Under Tude's advice, Sam decides to do something about it. He's vigorous, ruggedly handsome, an eminently successful farmer—why can't he marry Lily! He sends for hair dye, and applies it in secret. He hides his glasses, and finally builds up nerve to ask Lily in an overly casual tone if she will go eat a chop-suey dinner with him over at Buckeye Lake. The audience can't help warm-hearted laughter at Sam's wry wincing when each time he seems to be making a fine impression on Lily, someone slaps him on the back exclaiming

Price, 75c Per Copy

"Good old Stover!" Sam even bribes little Carol Ann with a toy house and magnifying glass to stay home and let him take Lily to a carnival alone. Then, to Sam's horror, just as he's arranged everything, Carol Ann tells the neighbors all about it. They are scandalized, and so are Sam's relatives, who are concerned about their inheritance rights in Sam's big farm. Their agitated maneuvering breaks up the romance, and the joy goes out of Sam's life. He suddenly feels old. Lily comes to say goodbye, and they're both unhappy. Then Sam, in defiant rebellion and with nothing to lose, tells Lily everything—shows her the hair dye; puts on his glasses; even brings out the mail order ring that he secretly ordered. The final scene is one of delight and beauty, and the play ends happily and intelligently. It's a comedy of charm and glorious characterization—it had to be to tempt Walter Huston from motion pictures back to the stage—and while simple to produce, it offers wonderful opportunities to the amateur producer and actor.

Royalty on Application

## The DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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